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GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—
A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS WAREHOUSE,
C. F. CLAY, MANAGER.
London: FETTER LANE, E.C.
Glasgow: 50, WELLINGTON STREET.

Leipzig: F. A. BROCKHAUS.
New York: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.
Bombay and Calcutta: MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

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THE SONG OF SOLOMON

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

Edited by

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CAMBRIDGE:
at the University Press
1907

225.1
H293

First Edition 1902
Reprinted 1907

PREFACE

BY THE

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE present General Editor for the Old Testament in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges desires to say that, in accordance with the policy of his predecessor the Bishop of Worcester, he does not hold himself responsible for the particular interpretations adopted or for the opinions expressed by the editors of the several Books, nor has he endeavoured to bring them into agreement with one another. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion in regard to many questions of criticism and interpretation, and it seems best that these differences should find free expression in different volumes. He has endeavoured to secure, as far as possible, that the general scope and character of the series should be observed, and that views which have a reasonable claim to consideration should not be ignored, but he has felt it best that the final responsibility should, in general, rest with the individual contributors.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK.

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CONTENTS.

		PAGES
I.	INTRODUCTION.	
	1. The Name of the Book and its Place in the Canon	ix
	2. The Unity of the Book	xi
	3. Is the Book a Drama?	xviii
	4. The Age and Authorship of the Book	xxiii
	5. The purpose of the Poem	xxxi
	6. The Allegorical Interpretation	xxxv
	7. History of the Allegorical Interpretation	xli
	8. Outline of the Book	xlvi
	9. Literature	li
II.	TEXT AND NOTES	1—62
III.	APPENDIX I. TRANSLATION	63—73
IV.	APPENDIX II. On Budde's Hypothesis	74—93
	INDEX	94—96

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The Name of the Book and its Place in the Canon.*

THE first verse gives the title of the book, as "the Song of songs, which is Solomon's." This superscription can hardly be an original part of the book, since the use of *ăsher* for "which" is contrary to the practice of the author or authors. Nowhere in the book proper do we find anything but the prefix '*sh*' for the relative. The meaning of the title is not as some Jewish commentators (e.g. Abr. ibn Ezra and D. Kimchi) thought, "A Collection of Songs." To obtain such a meaning we should have either to translate "A song consisting of songs," a use of the construct state without parallel in Hebrew: or to give '*shir*' an entirely different meaning in the first case from that which it has in the second. Both alternatives are extremely unlikely. The only well-attested meaning of such a composite expression is the superlative. It should mean therefore 'The best or greatest of songs'; just as we have 'a slave of slaves,' that is, the lowest of slaves, 'vanity of vanities,' i.e. the vainest of all things. The latter clause of the verse 'which is Solomon's' should not be taken as qualifying only 'songs,' but the whole compound expression 'Song of songs.' 'The best' or 'sweetest of songs, by Solomon' would probably represent the thought which it is meant to convey. There can hardly be any doubt that the preposition *lĕ* prefixed to *Solomon* (translated by the genitive) is the so-called *lamedh auctoris*. Everywhere else it denotes the author of the book or poem, at the head of which it stands, not the subject of it. But, as will be shewn later, it is all but certain that Solomon was not the author. All the probabilities are that it was written after, perhaps long after, Solomon's day.

As for its place in the Canon of the Scriptures, the book is in the Hagiographic division; and in the German and French MSS. it is put after the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, as the first of the 'five rolls,' viz., Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther. These five books are placed thus in the Hebrew MSS. because they were appointed to be read at the great annual Feasts, Canticles on the eighth day of the Passover, Ruth at Pentecost, Lamentations on the ninth day of Ab, the day on which Jerusalem was destroyed, Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles, and Esther at the Feast of Purim. But, as Budde well points out, this is an artificial arrangement, and was probably not the earliest. The Spanish MSS, the Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 14*b*, 15*a*), and the Massora suggest that the older order was, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, so that the three Solomonic books should stand together. When it was admitted to its place in the Canon cannot be ascertained. It is very unlikely that it was uncanonical until the days of Rabbi Aqiba, as Grätz and others maintain. Delitzsch has pointed out that the discussion in A.D. 90 at Jabneh, in which Rabbi Aqiba took part, was not as to whether Ecclesiastes and the Canticles ought to be admitted into the Canon, but as to whether they ought to have been admitted. Consequently they were then, i.e. in A.D. 90, part of the Canon. This view is supported by the fact that in the Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 14*b*, 15*a*) "the enriching of the Canon by the books of Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song, and Ecclesiastes is ascribed to Hezekiah's College of scribes (Prov. xxv. 1)" (Delitzsch).

The date actually given for the reception of these books is, of course, wrong; but it is significant that they should be grouped together in this way. It was certainly ancient Jewish opinion that the Canticles were not admitted almost by themselves, and at a very late date. The date of the Septuagint translation is quite uncertain. How much exactly the Son of Sirach meant by "the Law, the Prophets, and the other writings," which existed in a Greek version in his day, is unknown. The Song may have been among the "other writings," or it may not. Josephus, however (*Cont. Apion.* i. 8), gives us reason to believe that the Song and Ecclesiastes formed part of the sacred

books in his day among the Hellenistic Jews, as well as among the Palestinian Jews, and he asserts that they had done so for centuries. If he is to be trusted on this point, the Song of Solomon was in the Canon before our era, but was disputed just as the *antilegomena* of the New Testament were. In both cases, the fact that there were doubts ought not to obscure the other fact, that these books had been accepted as canonical before the discussions of which we hear were raised about them. Another reason for thinking that the Song was canonical in pre-Christian times is, as Budde also points out, that the conditions upon which books were admitted into the Canon by the Jewish councils were these:—(1) they must have a religious meaning; (2) they must have been written (or have been held to have been written) not later than Ezra's time, for it was only up to that time that the Holy Spirit of prophecy was active, and that alone could inspire canonical books. The first demand was met by the allegorical interpretation, which can be traced from the earliest beginnings of Jewish comment among the authorities of the Mishnah who decided finally as to the canonicity of the book. (Cp. Grätz, p. 115, who mentions as allegorists the patriarch Gamaliel, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Aqiba, Rabbi Papias.) The second requirement was met by attributing the book to Solomon, and regarding it as a book of *Chokhmah* or Wisdom (cp. the superscription in the Syriac version, "Wisdom of wisdoms"). There would, consequently, be no difficulty in canonising it when such assumptions were made.

§ 2. *The Unity of the Book.*

A glance at the book is sufficient to shew that in it we hear the utterances not of one voice but of several. There are dialogue, monologue, and narrative in it; and the first impulse undoubtedly is, to endeavour to weave out of it a connected whole. So long as the allegorical exegesis prevailed this was not difficult. The luxuriance of the allegorical fancy was equal to much more difficult tasks than this. It was only when modern historical exegesis began to deal with it that the difficulty of

discovering any coherent plan in the book was really felt. When it was felt, the first impulse was to get rid of it by taking the several well-marked sections of the book to be separate songs, all celebrating natural earthly love between the sexes. In this way the book was taken to be a collection of love poems, much like the collections of love poems by Burns or Heine. Some (e.g. Bleek) even supposed that they were by various authors. But the similarity of language and the sameness of the imagery throughout, as well as the recurrence of phrases which throw back the reader's thoughts from one part to the other, seemed to most of those who took this view to make it necessary to assume the same author for all. In this form the hypothesis was criticised and rejected by Professor Robertson Smith in his article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on the following grounds. "The correctness of this view would be positively demonstrated if its adherents were able, without arbitrary treatment of the text, to digest the Canticles into a series of lyrics, each complete in itself and independent of the rest. But no commentator has hitherto done this in a satisfactory way, and the most ingenious attempts—especially that of Magnus—involve the assumption that the editor often displaced part of a song, sacrificing the unity of the original lyrics to an artificial composition of the whole. It is plain that if assumptions of this kind are to be made at all, they may also be used in favour of a theory of original unity marred by subsequent misconception." Before and since his time the great bulk of commentators have preferred to this the view that the book is a unity, more or less dramatic, and have interpreted it on that hypothesis.

But the former view has been re-stated by Budde in the *Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament* (1898), with an enthusiasm and an ingenuity which is bound to give it a new life. Noting and admitting the force of the objections previously made to the view that we have here a collection of separate love songs, he has constructed a theory certainly much more coherent and in many ways better fitted to ward off attack than former ones.

Founding his view upon Wetzstein's famous Essay upon "The Syrian Threshing Board," which appeared in Bastian's

Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, 1873, and which Delitzsch partly republished in his commentary on Canticles and Ecclesiastes, Budde endeavours to prove that the Song of Songs is a collection of the national or popular songs (*Volkslieder*) sung at weddings by professional or amateur singers. From this it would result, of course, that the book never had any sacred character nor any deeper meaning, and that it should never, properly speaking, have been in the Canon of Holy Scripture at all. The main ground for his contention is that to-day at the weddings of the peasantry in the trans-Jordanic and trans-Lebanon districts, the bride and bridegroom are feasted for seven days, during that time are called 'king' and 'queen,' are served and honoured as such, and do no work at all, but preside over the festivities, seated on high above the guests and adorned with all their wedding attire. Many songs and dances are performed in their honour, and among the songs there are always what are called *wasfs*, i.e. descriptions of the persons and adornments of the king and queen, almost identical in character with those found in the Song of Solomon, and equally with them going beyond all that modern Western feeling would tolerate. Wetzstein has given specimens of the songs used to-day on such occasions, and Budde, after comparing them with the Song, comes to the conclusion that there must have been guilds of professional singers at weddings, and that we have in our book simply the *répertoire* of some ancient guild brother, who, in order to assist his memory, wrote down at random all the songs he could remember, or those he thought the best. He does not deny that the book has a similarity of style and vocabulary which suggests that it is throughout the work of one author; but he accounts for that by saying that the popular songs current at one time in one district have always a family likeness, and that there was originally nothing more here. Any unity which the book may now have beyond that, and any traces of dramatic action which may be found in it, he accounts for by the supposition that it was edited, perhaps more than once, before it was received into the Canon. "The songs may," he says, "quite well have been transposed and arranged according to some guiding principle or principles, and equally well

trouble may have been taken to insert here and there transitions and connecting links to bring life and movement into the monotony of the same ideas."

Now the advantages of this chain of hypotheses, for it is nothing else, are obvious. It recognises, and explains after a fashion, the unity of style and vocabulary, the recurrence of common phrases, the persistence of the same persons, viz. the bride and bridegroom, throughout the book, and the constant references to spring, since that is the favourite season for marriages. It further leaves a broad margin for fragments which cannot be accounted for in their present setting. Lastly, it has the additional advantage that it explains those strange descriptions of the bride and bridegroom, which are so manifestly related to the *wasf* of the bridal ceremonies described by Wetzstein.

But it has also many disadvantages, and these are so formidable that they would seem absolutely to bar the acceptance of Budde's theory. As the matter is of very great importance, and as many leading scholars have accepted his theory, we may perhaps believe in sheer weariness of the debate—the matter is discussed fully in the Appendix. Here it must suffice to indicate shortly the main grounds of objection.

(1) The unity in tone and language which is so striking a feature of the book is not sufficiently accounted for by the supposition that the collection of songs of which these are specimens was current in one district. The Border ballads of the North of England and the South of Scotland, though they have a marked general likeness, could hardly be mistaken for the work of one author. The Song of Solomon, on the contrary, inevitably suggests that it is the work of one person. The difference between the general likeness in the former case, and that which we find here, appears to be radical, for Budde's alternative hypothesis that they may have been written down by someone from his recollection of some particular marriage feast, does not help us to explain the kind and degree of unity which has to be accounted for any better than the fact of their currency in one district.

(2) Prof. Budde has to make so many concessions to the

view that the book is a unity, that in the end it remains doubtful whether he has not actually surrendered to that view. He admits that the original songs of which he thinks the book is composed have been edited more than once; that they have been transposed and arranged according to some guiding principles; and that transitions and connecting links have been supplied. If so, then the Song of Solomon as it lies before us now is a connected dramatic or semi-dramatic whole; and if it was brought into its present form before it was received into the Canon, as Budde seems to think, then it is as a dramatic or semi-dramatic whole that it must be interpreted. What the previous history of the constituent parts of the book may have been is a purely literary question of merely subordinate interest.

(3) Neither the number nor the character of the songs in the book is such as the hypothesis would require. The marriage feast as described by Wetzstein lasted seven or eight days. Every day there were a number of dances to which songs were sung. Now the number of songs given here, twenty-three according to Budde, and ten according to Siegfried, who accepts Budde's view, would hardly be large enough for one wedding, and could not, therefore, represent the *répertoire* of a professional singer. Then as to their character there are difficulties. According to Wetzstein a large number of the songs at the weddings he describes are warlike, here in the Song they are all peaceful. According to Wetzstein there are always in the later part of the festival songs sung to celebrate the husband and wife together, here there are no such songs. Lastly, there is no mention here of the bride as 'queen,' though the bridegroom, according to this hypothesis, is called 'king' throughout, while according to Wetzstein the bride-queen and the bridegroom-king are led forth at an early stage with similar pomp and equal honour, and are called by the royal titles equally.

(4) According to this hypothesis no persons can be admitted as actors or subjects of the poems save the bride and bridegroom. Neither the 'Shulammite' nor 'Solomon,' consequently, can be *dramatis personae*. They must be names for the bride and bridegroom, implying in the one case merely beauty, and in the other majesty. Now it can hardly be doubted that the

attempt to eliminate Solomon and the Shulammite in this way entirely fails. For in the first place, in chapp. vi. 8, 9 and viii. 11—13, the bridegroom and the bride are brought into contrast with Solomon, to the great disadvantage of the latter. It seems quite impossible, if it were the custom that the bridegroom should be called Solomon, that it should also be the custom to contrast him with Solomon. Then the difficulty of refining away the definite name the Shulammite into a mere synonym for the most lovely of women seems insuperable. On the other hand, the view that both Solomon and the Shulammite are persons about whom the book tells some story is supported by the occurrence of casual hints as to particular events and circumstances which are too varied and personal to be the mere generalities of formal wedding chants. The passages in which these are found are the following: i. 5, 6; iii. 6; iv. 8; vi. 9, 13; viii. 1, 2, 5, 8 ff. All these verses seem to give hints of a definite story forming the background of the poem or poems, and when pieced together they make a very simple and attractive tale on the basis of which the whole book can be explained. To Budde they are all stumbling-blocks, so he has to lop away what he cannot explain away.

(5) Budde's theory assumes that the marriage customs described by Wetzstein are homogeneous, which they certainly are not; and very ancient, if not primitive, which they most probably are not. For Wetzstein distinctly states that in language, metre, and character, some of the songs he heard were nomadic, while others belonged in all these respects to the settled people. That fact suggests that the marriage ceremonies he saw and the wedding songs he heard were a purely local and probably modern product, and that to assume that they represent universal Palestinian custom is unwarranted.

(6) The great panegyric on love in chap. viii. 6, 7 finds no fitting place on this theory. On any theory which takes this book to be a unity, that passage is the culmination of the whole. On Budde's theory, that it is merely one of the songs sung at weddings all over the country, it loses its importance and its depth of meaning, and becomes almost absurdly incongruous. How strange it would seem to sing, "If a man should

give the whole substance of his house for love, yet would he be utterly contemned," at marriages where the assumption was that such love as was felt had been a mere matter of purchase and sale.

For these reasons therefore, and for others given in the Appendix, it does not appear to be possible to accept Budde's solution of the difficulties connected with this poem, notwithstanding his naïve surprise that anyone who has not formed a dramatic theory of his own, should not at once accept it. But as has already been indicated, the connection between the *wasf* as it is used in Syria to-day and certain parts of the Song of Solomon is too palpable to be doubted. But if the descriptions of the persons of the bride and bridegroom in the Song are not specimens of the wedding *wasf*, what then are they? Our answer is that nothing could be more natural than that a writer who was dealing with love and marriage among a people who delighted in such descriptions of physical beauty as these should either write such descriptions, taking the wedding *wasf* as his model, or should take over from the popular collections of such things those he most admired. It need hardly be said that the former is much the more probable, both in itself, seeing that the best *wasf* Wetzstein quotes is the work of the best poet of the time and of the place where it was sung, not a popular song (*Volkslied*) at all, and also because the linguistic colour of the book is so remarkably uniform. Further, a similar imitation of the *wasf* is found on Amru ibn Kulthum's *Mo'allaqa* (see note on iv. 1—7). The gain of Wetzstein's discovery is, that it gives us a very enlightening parallel to the parts of the Song of Solomon which are least acceptable to our taste, and shews that they were a natural outgrowth of the circumstances and taste of the time. It was as inevitable as it was right that the attempt should be made to work out Wetzstein's hypothesis as an explanation of this book, but since it has failed, we must fall back upon the view that the book is a connected whole, and is meant to be the development of the story which may be gathered from the various local and personal hints which it contains. Pieced together these give us a very simple and attractive tale as the background of the book.

A beautiful maiden of Shulam, born of well-off country folk, and her mother's only daughter, had harsh brothers. In their anger they had sent her to watch the vineyards. This necessarily exposed her to the sun and in a degree impaired her beauty. Having gone down one day into a garden to admire the growth of the plants and to enjoy the beauty of spring, she suddenly came upon a party of people belonging to the court, and by force or persuasion was conducted to a royal residence of Solomon, at first perhaps in Jerusalem, later to one somewhere near or in Lebanon. There the ladies of the hareem ("the daughters of Jerusalem") try to win her for the king. Solomon himself also pays his court, but she continues steadfast to a country lover. He comes and calls her to flee with him from Lebanon. Wearied by her continued resistance Solomon lets the faithful maiden go, and leaning on her beloved's arm she returns to her home. As they draw near he points to an apple-tree within sight of her home where he had once awakened her, and he adds, "Yonder was thy mother in travail with thee." Then she breaks forth into that fine praise of love which alone would make the poem immortal, and glances at the folly of the king in thinking to win true love by wealth and splendour. Then she proudly claims that she has shewn her brothers' fears for her chastity to be without foundation, and claims that it was because of this that she had found peace in Solomon's eyes. The reference to his vineyard is a continuation, in a lighter mood and in a more personal application, of, "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love," etc. All this is a fair inference from the hints given, and into such a hypothetical background all the passages which are so difficult for Budde may be taken up.

§ 3. *Is the book a drama?*

Shall we then say with Ewald that the poem is a drama? The points making for that view are well stated by Budde. He says in the Introduction to his Commentary, p. xii, "The book introduces persons speaking, often in dialogues, mostly without any introduction, and where an account is given of them

and of their speeches in the third person, the narrator is, so far as can be traced, also one of the actors (cf. ch. iii. 1 ff. 6 ff., ch. v. 2 ff., ch. viii. 8 ff.). The poet on the contrary nowhere appears. If the book be a unity, then doubtless we have in all this a characteristic of the drama." He objects, however, to the dramatic view for a number of reasons, some of which, e.g. the assertions that the completed marriage is assumed in chs. i and ii, and that Solomon and the Shulammite, "the most necessary persons of the drama," are wanting, have been dealt with in the Appendix. Those we have not discussed there are the following. (1) Those who believe the poem to be a drama do not agree as to the number of the *dramatis personae*; as to the action; nor as to the words spoken by the various speakers. But there is not much force in these objections. If an act of one of Shakespeare's plays were stripped of all outward indications of the speakers, the attempt to restore them would result in similar differences. Moreover those who regard the book as a collection of songs are equally unable to agree. There is no agreement among them either, as to where the various songs begin and end. (2) "There is a total want of a higher conception of love, other than the mere sensual one, till all the action is over." That of course is true on Budde's interpretation of the text, but it is not true, if, throughout, the bride be resisting attacks upon her fidelity, which of course is the theory held by all who see in the poem a unity at all.

But the remaining objections have more force in them. (1) The drama is elsewhere unknown in Semitic literature, though of course, as Reuss says, if this is a drama, the objection falls. (2) "Though there is dialogue in parts, yet by far the greater number of the sections are monologues, and we are constantly compelled again and again to leave the interlocutors without an answer." (3) "All external indications of drama, names of persons, changes of scene, etc. are wanting." The last objection might perhaps be got over in this way. If the book really belonged to the Greek or even to the Persian period, it might have been written with a knowledge of the Greek drama, and in that case it may originally have had all these

external indications. But in the Maccabean time, when all things Greek were regarded with hatred and anything connected with the theatre was looked on with horror, the names of persons, the changes of scene, etc. may have been removed, in order that this true product of the Hebrew heart and mind might not come under the condemnation which then fell on everything Greek. But, of course, if the date was earlier, the difficulty would be to conceive how a drama technically correct in form could have been written at all ; and if it were written, it is difficult to see why the dramatic directions should have been omitted. The dramatic form would not in that case have been regarded as foreign, and the directions, etc. could hardly have been dropped by chance. The monologues, too, are undeniably undramatic, and in this uncertainty the fact that no other drama is known in the literature of the Semitic peoples has weight in the opposite scale.

On the whole then it does not appear probable that our poem was ever intended to be performed on the stage, or that it had a fully developed dramatic form. It has, and probably from the beginning had, dramatic elements in it. It contains lyrical monologues, and the poet himself nowhere appears. Is there any kind of poem which would have these characteristics? At once the mind reverts to the dramatic lyrics of Robert Browning, whose manner of writing in some of his blank verse poems is the nearest modern analogy we have to the prophetic style. There are two poems of his especially which suggest themselves as possible parallels. "*James Lee's Wife*" and "*In a Gondola.*" If one person speaks throughout the Song, as Grätz and Reuss maintain, then "*James Lee's Wife*" is a perfect analogy. It gives us a series of pictures from a life, revealing the gradual decay of love and the reflections thereon of the speaker, who is also an actor. If on the other hand there are various speakers, then "*In a Gondola*" would be the best parallel, for there we have dialogue, monologue, musings, almost dreams, and a historic background which suddenly becomes visible in the tragic end of the poem. The only indications Browning gives of the change of the speakers in this latter poem are "He sings," "She speaks," "He sings," "She sings,"

"He muses," "Still he muses," "She replies musing," but without these a careful reader would be able to distinguish the parts. There would doubtless be dispute as to two or three sections, but it would not be a serious detriment to the whole if different views were taken of these ambiguous portions. The main outline of the story would stand out in any case, and seeing that in some of Browning's poems such headings as we find here were an afterthought, put in to meet the accusation of obscurity, it may well be that originally, as in "*James Lee*," the pauses and changes were indicated only by a line in this poem also.

As to which of these alternatives is to be taken most readers will have little doubt. There are no indications in the Song that one person speaks throughout. Had this been the case we should have had words such as "I said," "he said," at the beginning of some of the sections. It is no doubt true as Grätz says (p. 25), that very often such words are omitted in Hebrew where they must be understood, e.g. in the second Psalm, where there is a continuous dramatic dialogue, and only once are the words indicating it expressed. But that is something different from what we should need to suppose here. We should have to suppose that throughout eight chapters, almost entirely dialogue, these necessary words are consistently omitted save in one or two places. That is very unlikely, and the parallel passages quoted by Grätz all fail to justify this view, because they are in every case very short.

But if that cannot be accepted, then "*In a Gondola*" is the analogy we must follow. In that case the Song would be a series of lyrics, in varying form and rhythm, each representing a scene in a woman's life and containing the history of love's triumph in it. There is not necessarily action in every scene. There are musings, dreams, recollections, and the action does not round itself off as it would do in a drama. The *dénouement* is rather implied than expressed, for the inner experiences of the heart are the main thing, and external persons and things are only subordinate. They would not be mentioned at all were it not that they are the environment which conditions and stimulates the inward development. But, it may be asked, how

can the various persons engaged in the Song be disentangled without such indications as Browning gives, and if they were originally there, what has become of them? Perhaps they have been lost. Every class of interpreters has to make some such hypothesis about something. But could the speeches be disentangled without the aid of such announcements? Most assuredly. Just as a careful reader of "*In a Gondola*" would find indications of the change of persons without the external helps, and would on consideration be able to insert them for himself, so here the main divisions and all the persons concerned could be discovered, especially by those who read this poem or heard it recited when Hebrew was a living tongue. The fact that Hebrew has in many cases different forms for its masculine and feminine pronouns removes a considerable amount of the uncertainty which perplexes us in reading the Song in English. Such pronouns with us apply largely to both sexes. In Hebrew the forms are largely different. Moreover ancient Hebrew readers were naturally much more on the alert for a change of person than we are, who expect to be warned by external signs when new persons are addressed or are otherwise introduced. And then, as we have seen, Solomon and the Shulammite are characters in the piece, and all the indications point to the likelihood that the story of these two was a popular tale well known to everybody. It is hardly possible that such a story as has been drawn from these local and personal references could have been drawn from them if they were insertions casually and unintelligently made, or were due to misunderstandings of the text, as Budde suggests. If they were insertions of an editor, he must have had in his mind the tale which all those who take the dramatic view find there, in some shape, or it would be marvellous that they should all find it. But if he had it in his mind, and was intent upon binding unconnected songs into a whole to make them part of this story, he would have taken care to make the whole thing more explicit. Such unobtrusive alterations as are attributed to him would be inexplicable in the case supposed. It might be said that reverence for Canonical Scripture would restrain his hand. But Budde expressly says that the editing took place before the book found

its way into the Canon. Only on the supposition that a well-known story was in the mind of the original author, and that the poem was founded on it, can the incidental character of these references be explained. But if that were so, then there would remain no difficulty at all, for even to-day, if we *knew* that the tale of Solomon and the Shulammite ran as we have sketched it, we should have no difficulty in following the course of the thought. Fundamental differences as to the character of the poem would then be impossible, and the divergence of opinion as to the divisions would almost, if not entirely, disappear. The existence of such a tale would consequently give the easiest and best explanation as to how such a poem as we have in the Song of Songs could have come into being, and would make clear, as nothing else does, how the external indications as to the parts taken by various speakers, which we so greatly miss now, may have been superfluous when the poem was written[1].

§ 4. *The Age and Authorship of the Book.*

If we could rely upon the superscription as original, Solomon would be the author: and if there were any likelihood or even possibility that Solomon was the author, the age of the book would, of course, be settled, as indeed it would be if any known author could be named. But there is no real ground for thinking that Solomon wrote the book. The superscription is by another hand, as the use of *ăsher* in it, while it never occurs

[1] How natural it is to leave out such indications of the speakers, may be seen also in Michelangelo's poem on the death of Cecchino Bracci. It consists of 48 stanzas of 4 lines each, and from beginning to end there are no external indications that the speakers change. Yet the reader soon sees that he must supply these for himself, and the German translator of this and other poems of Michelangelo, Walter Robert-Tornow, has to insert them. He does so in this way, "The poet speaks," "The dead man speaks," "The dead man speaks, death answers," "The poet speaks, the dead answers," "The poet speaks to Riccio" [another friend of the deceased, who however is not named in the poem], "The Sarcophagus speaks," "The Sarcophagus speaks tc Riccio," though again no indication of the speaker is given. It is almost certain that some of the stanzas would be allotted otherwise by other editors, but it is undeniable that some distribution of them to various speakers must be made.

in the book, shews. Moreover, the mention of Tirzah would seem of itself to exclude such a supposition, for that city was not in a position to be placed in contrast with Jerusalem till twenty or thirty years after Solomon's death. It was only in the reign of Baasha that Tirzah became the capital of the Northern kingdom. Indeed Solomon was held to be the author apparently, only because his name is mentioned in it, and because on the ordinary interpretation, he was the chief actor. In a similar way Samuel came to be regarded as the author of the books of Samuel. The other reasons given by modern writers like Delitzsch who cling to the idea that Solomon was the author are such as these, "the familiarity with nature, the fulness and extent of the book's geographical and artistic references, the mention made of so many exotic plants and foreign things, particularly of such objects of luxury as the Egyptian horses." But these, though interesting points for the filling up of the somewhat vague outlines of Solomon's reputation as an artist, an enquirer into nature, and a great trader who had extensive intercourse with foreign countries, if we knew him to be the author of the Song, appear too slight supports for the theory that only he could have been the author. Finally, if the interpretation we have adopted be correct, Solomon simply cannot have been its author. Nor is the argument from parallel passages much more convincing as to age. Oettli compares Hosea xiv. 6—9 with Song ii. 1, 3, iv. 11, vi. 11, and boldly concludes that Hosea had read the latter. But a careful comparison of the passages will shew that more probably there is no nearer resemblance between them than would naturally arise where the same things are described, and where there may easily have been a traditional mode of describing such things, upon which the authors of both books may have formed their style. Then too, there is the difficulty of saying which was first, even if one must have copied from the other. The resemblances to the first part of the book of Proverbs upon which Delitzsch and Oettli also rest appear again to be only slight coincidences of expression and simile such as might be expected when ideas are similar. But were they much more significant than they

are, their value for deciding the date of the Song depends altogether upon whether the date of Proverbs i—ix is itself sufficiently established to give a fixed point from which we may reckon. But that is, as yet at least, not the case. While Delitzsch would refer Proverbs i—ix to the reign of Jehoshaphat, Ewald, A. B. Davidson, and Nowack place it shortly before the exile, Cheyne and Kuenen regard it as post-exilic, and Stade, Frankenberg, and Holtzmann would bring it down to the Greek age. Obviously till some more definite agreement as to the age of this section of Proverbs has been reached, little can be gained by saying that other books were written before or after it.

The really decisive element in regard to date will undoubtedly prove to be the very conspicuous peculiarities of the language of the book. There are in it for instance many words "found never, or rarely besides, in Biblical Hebrew, but common in Aramaic." These have been tabulated in his lucid manner by Driver in his *Introduction*[6], p. 448, and are pointed out in the commentary where they occur. The only possible explanations of this fact are two. Either the Song was written after the exile, or there was a large infusion of Aramaic words in the language of the Northern kingdom, and the Song is in the Northern dialect. This latter supposition is emphatically denied by Budde. He says it is "totally groundless" and asks where the author (he must mean the transcriber for he does not admit one author) shews himself so familiar with North Palestinian localities as Driver still says. "The names of a number of mountains which everybody knew, and the one city (Tirzah)...that is all. As against these we have Engedi, Sharon, Heshbon, Kedar, which point to the south, and above all Jerusalem, with a whole series of references. There, and not in the north, are the roots of the Song of Songs. The 'daughters of Jerusalem' alone would be sufficient to prove this." But if the hypothesis that the greater part of the action of the poem takes place in the Lebanon be true, as we think it is, the matter assumes another aspect. Besides, Budde fails to see that Driver grants him all these southern references, but claims that the places with which the author seems to be most familiar and to which he turns

most frequently, are localities in Northern Palestine. That must surely be admitted, and it is difficult to see how the mention of 'daughters of Jerusalem' can disprove it. Budde says they cannot be ladies of the royal hareem and Court, because these were notoriously not daughters of Jerusalem, but brought mainly from foreign lands. But surely that is hypercriticism. To the country folk, the ladies of the Court would be 'daughters of Jerusalem' in contrast to themselves, and no thought of whether these were born in the great city or not would enter their mind. Notwithstanding Budde's objection, therefore, it seems probable that the poem is North Palestinian, or at least that the story upon which it is founded was so. But can the peculiarities of its language be sufficiently explained by this fact? Driver cautiously says "there is reason to suppose that the language spoken in North Israel differed dialectically from that of Judah." But while there are some indications of this they are too scanty to give confidence that such very marked Aramaic formations as "*shăllāmāh*" (i. 7) and a construction like "my vineyard which is to me" (i. 6) or "his bed which is to Solomon" (iii. 7) found elsewhere only in the Mishnah and in Syriac, can ever have belonged to the Hebrew language anywhere in pre-exilic days. For the post-exilic date there are strong arguments. The foreign words *pardēs* and *appiryōn* can hardly be pre-exilic. Further, though the form "*sh*" for "*ăsher*" occurs in the Song of Deborah and in some few earlier narratives, and though the history of it is extraordinarily obscure, nevertheless its exclusive use in the Song undoubtedly tends to range the book along with the later books such as Lamentations, Jonah, Ecclesiastes, and the late Psalms. To these internal indications must be added a most important external one. As we have seen, there was doubt and discussion as to the Song's right to a place in the Canon down to 100 A.D., and some, even later than that, sang it as a profane song in wineshops. Now that, as Budde remarks, could hardly have been the case had it been written a thousand years before, and been handed down from generation to generation, more especially as we cannot account for its preservation over so long a period if it had not been regarded as sacred literature.

Whereas, if it was a comparatively recent production, this doubt, hesitation, and misuse were more or less natural.

The preponderance of evidence, consequently, appears to be altogether in favour of a late date. But how late? The decision will largely depend on the borrowed words such as *pardēs* and *appiryōn*. The former is undoubtedly Persian, being derived from the Zend "*pairidaêza*=an enclosure, and its occurrence here is very difficult to explain if our book was written before the Persian period. For the use of the word here and in Ecclesiastes ii. 5 implies not merely that the writers of these books knew what it meant, but also that its meaning was known to the readers to whom they addressed themselves. Now the thing signified could not by its nature have come to the knowledge of the Jews by commerce, but must have been seen either in Persia or Palestine as a Persian arrangement. Consequently, the Persian period is the earliest time in which this word could be popularly known. That it would then be known to the Jews we know from Nehemiah ii. 8, where we are told there was a *pardēs* of the king, i.e. of the Persian king, near Jerusalem. After that had been established, and it must have been a number of years old at the time of Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem (B.C. 445), since he expected to get from its trees timber to make beams for the gates of the castle, etc., the name would be generally known to the Jews. For any earlier date the onus of proof must lie with those who assert it. A mere hypothesis that Solomon or some other king of Israel may have had a 'paradise' about one of his palaces is of no value. Another Persian word is undoubtedly *ĕgōz*=nut, but that might have reached Palestine at any date along with the thing. Its presence here however in company with *pardēs* strengthens the probability of direct intercourse with Persia. On the whole, therefore, the Persian period seems to be the earliest date we can fix, but since there was a *pardēs* near Jerusalem quite early in that period our book need not have been later than Nehemiah's first visit. With regard to *appiryōn*, it is generally said that if it be derived from the Greek *phoreion* (φορεῖον), then the Song must have been written in the Greek period. But that is by no means certain. Professor

Flinders Petrie in his *Ten Years Digging in Egypt*, p. 54 and elsewhere, points out that in the great fortress of Tahpanhes founded by Psamtik I (664—610), as a camp for the Greek mercenaries by whose aid he had won the crown, and inhabited by them till the city was destroyed by Amasis in 564, a period of nearly a century, we have a centre from which Greek things and Greek names would almost certainly have become known to the Jews long before the Grecian period. When Jeremiah was carried thither against his will in 586 the Greek camp was still there, and we cannot shut out the possibility that such a thing as a *phoreion* may have become known to the Jews then, and may have been brought back from Egypt along with its name when the Jewish worship was restored and the new community began to prosper and to attract, as it naturally would do, all Jews so near as those in Egypt. Even if *appiryōn* were Greek, therefore, it need not carry us down beyond the date to which the word *pardēs* points, but there is no certainty even of that. Professor Robertson Smith was of opinion that this word might be a Hebrew version of the Sanscrit *paryanka*=a palankin.

But it will be said, Is there not in the Song evidence that the land was prosperous, that there had been no catastrophes known? Could such a book have been written in Israel after the exile? Some would even ask, Could it have been written after Solomon's glory and the peace and prosperity of his reign had ceased to be a fresh and vivid memory? To that our reply would be that it is a most perilous thing to say that bright and cheerful poems can have been written only in bright and prosperous times; or that gloomy and despondent poems necessarily imply that the time is out of joint. The moods and circumstances of the poet himself count for much more in the tone of his works than the general condition of his country. Otherwise Shakespeare, living in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," could never have written Sonnet 66, "Tired with all these, for restful death I cry." All that can be justly said is, that in a time of disaster and trouble, like the Thirty Years' War for example, the bulk of the literature will probably deal with war and disaster. But as there may have been quiet corners in Germany where even that

appalling calamity was scarcely felt, and where seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, followed one another in a peaceful round, and in which there might easily have been a writer who dealt only with the idyllic aspects of country life even in such a period of tumults and wars, so here. There are very few periods of Hebrew history in which the spring with its freshness and beauty and the intoxication of first love, might not have inspired such a glorious song as we have here. All that is necessary at any time is a mind and heart receptive of all external beauty and susceptible to man's highest joy, and a genius adequate to express that beauty and joy. It may of course be rightly enough contended that such a mind and heart conjoined with such a genius must have felt with and for the mass of the nation and its circumstances, and that no such single-hearted song of love and joy could have been sung when the people were suffering under the evils of war or the oppression of tyranny. But a little moment of rest in the midst of such turmoils, a few years of better hope, a cessation of the immediate pressure of evil by the death of a tyrant or his change to a better mind, these, combined with personal freedom from anxiety, might leave a poet such as this free to the natural exercise of his powers. Now such a breathing space did occur after the visit of Nehemiah, after the time when we know the *pardēs* of the Eastern kings had become known to the Jews. The poverty and fewness of the people passed away (see Wellhausen, *Isr. und Jüd. Geschichte*, 1897, p. 199), and there came a time when the agricultural prosperity inspired many a song of praise. It seems probable therefore that Wellhausen is right when he says (*op. cit.* p. 197), "The most original" (of the Hagiographic writings) "is the Song of Solomon; the names and things which occur in it assign it clearly to this period, i.e. the second half of the Persian period. We see from it that the Law had not yet forbidden love poetry to the Jews, and had not made the enjoyment of life impossible." Moreover it was at this time that the Jews began to speak Aramaic in the ordinary intercourse of life. Nehemiah (cp. Neh. xiii. 24) was scandalised that there were in Jerusalem Jews whose children spake half in the speech of Ashdod and could not speak in the Jews'

language." Evidently therefore up to this time the 'Jews' language' was Hebrew, such as Nehemiah himself wrote. But what was the language of Ashdod? Formerly it was supposed that this was the Philistine speech. But Nöldeke, in his article on the Semitic languages in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says it was a dialect of Hebrew, since coins struck in Ashdod in the 4th century B.C. have Hebrew inscriptions written in Greek characters. From this he infers that up to that time the Philistines must have been speaking Hebrew, and, consequently, to a still later period the Jews must have spoken it. The language of Ashdod in that case would simply be a dialect of Hebrew like the language of Moab in Mesha's day. But Wellhausen (*op. cit.*, p. 200, note 2) contends that "these supposed coins of Ashdod with supposed Hebrew inscriptions have now been proved to be coins struck by Persian satraps," who, we may suppose, would use the Hebrew tongue as being the sacred tongue of the most numerous population in that neighbourhood, so that no inference as to the language of Ashdod at that time can be drawn from them. He goes on to say that this speech of Ashdod was the Aramaic which was spoken by the Western neighbours of the Jews. But he omits to notice that the children of the Ashdodite, Ammonite, and Moabite women spoke "according to the language of each people." But if Aramaic was spoken in Nehemiah's day in Ashdod and was also spoken as we know in the land of North Israel, it is almost certain that it would be spoken in Ammon and Moab, which were first exposed to Aramaic influences. In that case there would have been little difference between the children of the women of the three countries named, Ashdod, Moab, and Ammon; they would all have spoken Aramaic. It is more probable, therefore, that the speech of Ashdod, if Aramaic at all, was Aramaic very strongly mixed with the ancient Philistine language, whatever that may have been. But apart from debatable questions of this kind, Aramaic was the speech in which all Government business in Western Palestine was conducted in Western Asia under Persia. In Cilicia, even, Persian coins were issued with Aramaic inscriptions (cp. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. *Numismatics*), and more and more after Nehemiah's time the

new tongue pressed in. The language of the Song would precisely fit that time. It can hardly be that Hebrew was not a living language when this exquisite poem was written. Yet it can hardly be that the author of it was not daily in contact with speakers of Aramaic. In the latter part of the Persian period, say from 400 onwards, these conditions were present in Judæa as they were not afterwards, and consequently it is in this period that we would place the Song.

§ 5. *The Purpose of the Poem.*

If it be asked to what end the author can have written such a poem, the answer will necessarily be found in the fine description of love in ch. viii. 6—7. Given a connected poem, then this is manifestly the culmination of the thought and feeling of the piece, and everything else must be read in the light of it.

> Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
> As a seal upon thine arm:
> For strong as death is Love,
> Cruel as Sheol is jealousy.
> The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
> Its flames are flames of Yah.
> Many waters cannot quench Love,
> Neither can rivers drown it:
> If a man should give all the substance of his house for Love,
> He would be utterly contemned.

What inspires the writer is the power, the everlastingness, the freedom of love between the sexes, and its exclusiveness when it is real. He thinks of it as dominating the whole nature irresistibly, as enduring through all the chances and changes of life, as looking down with contempt upon all worldly advantage, and as permitting no dissipation among a number. Whatever action there is in the poem will necessarily be meant to illustrate this; and though there is perhaps no directly didactic purpose to denounce polygamy, still the exhibition of such a love in action must necessarily do that. The praise of such love cannot but become a satire upon what usually passes for love in a world in which polygamy is practised. Besides, in order to bring out

artistically the beauty and graciousness of true love, a foil of some kind is almost necessary, and two distinct kinds of love are clearly portrayed. Neither is ascetic. The glorification of the single life has no place here. The author makes no attempt

"to wind himself too high
For sinful men beneath the sky"

in this fashion. He has no jealousy or hatred of the flesh, but rather is of the sounder human opinion which Browning puts into the mouth of another Hebrew, Rabbi ben Ezra,

"All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul."

The higher kind of love is exhibited in the utterances of the Shulammite and her country lover; the lower, entirely sensual kind, the love of the polygamist, is expressed in those of Solomon, and that of the women of the hareem in ch. vii. 1 ff. It is of course possible to say that the difference of level between these two sorts of utterances is not so marked as a modern Western poet would have made it, and that even the better view is unpleasantly sensuous to us. But we must not forget that if our reading of the poem be accepted, all that is said by the faithful lovers is to be read in the light of ch. viii. 6, 7, and of the fact that the Shulammite is all the while exhibiting the higher qualities of love, superiority to sense, fidelity in temptation, and that tender brooding of the imagination on the loved one, which lift even common natures to heights they would never otherwise attain. Then too such a verse as viii. 1, "Oh that thou wert my brother," coming as it does almost at the end, should be allowed to throw the reflection of its innocence over all that precedes; and any hints the language gives that in this passionate affection other things too are regarded as well as mere physical beauty, should be allowed full weight. When that is done we venture to think that nothing will be found in the verses referred to incompatible with love of a high kind. As for the other speeches, they are unmitigatedly coarse. They are cold too in passion, and are entirely incompatible with anything higher than mere sensual voluptuousness. But ch. vii. 1 ff. would be intolerable even in the mouth of Solomon

when addressed to the Shulammite as she is pictured to us. In the mouths of women of the hareem however the language is exactly what we should expect, and coming from them would not be so degrading to a sensitive girl as it would be coming from a man. But in all the descriptions of persons the influence of the marriage *wasf* is apparent, and it is probably to the popular grossness of these models that we owe the want of reticence which is so great a stumbling-block to the modern mind.

The reader will perceive that those interpretations of the Song are passed by, in which, though it is taken as a whole, only one lover appears. The reason of this omission is that neither Delitzsch, nor Castelli, nor Martineau (so far as the views of the latter have yet been published), seems to us to have explained the poem satisfactorily on the supposition that the chief speakers are only two. Delitzsch's Commentary is in most respects an admirable piece of work, but we think few will find themselves able to believe that a voluptuary like Solomon could be raised to the height of a pure love by the beauty of the Shulammite, or that the whole plot of the book should arise from a temporary lapse from his devotion which occurs after the marriage in ch. iv. The hypothesis, also, that the king plays at being a shepherd for her sake, is too improbable. Castelli and Martineau, on the other hand, are not successful in eliminating Solomon as one of the speakers. Budde counts them as in part allies, as they are to some extent, but they think of Solomon as being at least a silent actor (iii. 6 f.), and they are thus as hostile as well can be to Budde's main position, the identification of the king and Solomon with the bridegroom. But most of the grounds which we have adduced against the elimination of Solomon by Budde are valid against their milder procedure, and seem to us to make their view untenable.

Viewed simply as poetry, the Song of Songs is lovely. If as Milton says "poetry should be simple, sensuous, passionate," then here we have poetry of singular beauty and power. Such unaffected delight in all things fair as we find here is rare in any literature, and is especially remarkable in ancient Hebrew literature. The beauty of the world and of the creatures in it

has been so deeply and warmly felt, that even to-day this ancient poet's emotion of joy in them thrills through the reader. That is only another way of saying that here we have an exquisite and immortal work of art. And surely we have that. Could anything be more lovely than the song beginning (ii. 10), "Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away"? Could the curious helplessness of the dreamer in a dream, and the yearning of a maiden's affection be more exquisitely expressed than in v. 2 ff., "I was asleep but my heart waked"? But indeed the felicities of expression and the happy imaginings of the poem are endless. The spring of nature and of love has been caught and fixed in its many exquisite lines, as only Shakespeare elsewhere has done it; and understood as we think it must be understood, it has that ethical background of sacrifice and self-forgetting which all love poems must have to be thoroughly worthy. We agree with those who say it is what we should have expected among a people so penetrated with ethical and religious principles as the Hebrew people were, that the relation between the sexes should have been rightly set forth, and lifted above the degradation of mere sensualism and polygamy. For the marriage relation is the fundamental thing in the social life of man, and a true understanding of what its right conditions are is of the highest importance for the stability of the State and the right ordering of the family. It was fitting therefore that these conditions should be imaginatively set forth. Of course, the moral basis of marriage, as it was understood among the Hebrews, finds expression both in the popular *Māshāl* or proverb, and in the provisions of the Law. But it needed to find a finer and fuller voice, if the loftier and imaginative elements in it were to be set forth, and it has found that here. Nor need we be surprised that polygamy should be implicitly so severely censured. The Hebrew mind and conscience were, during the latter part of the history of the nation, uneasy about it; and although the truth that the thoroughly ideal relation in marriage can be found only where there is monogamy never entirely permeated Jewish family life in Old Testament times, Hosea's story may be taken to shew that this was recognised as at least the better opinion throughout the prophetic period. That

love between man and woman is love only when it is between two, has certainly been woven into the very fibre of the Song of Solomon. Amid all the aberrations of the allegorising interpretation this fundamental truth in the book has been caught and communicated; for whether the Shulammite has been taken to represent the Jewish nation, or the Christian Church, or the individual soul, her devotion to one and his devotion to her has been depicted always as exclusive and absorbing. That being so, the place of the book in the Canon of Scripture is justified. Nevertheless it is still possible that while the exhibition of human love at its best so far as that was known in his time was the primary object of the writer or compiler of the Song, he may also have felt and intended his readers to feel that he was therewith setting forth also the excellence of the highest love to God.

§ 6. *The Allegorical Interpretation.*

But it may be reasonably asked what grounds there are for thinking that the deeper meaning referred to at the end of last section may have been in the author's mind. They are as follows. It cannot be doubted that there are in the literatures of the East tales of love between man and woman, dealing with real persons or at least with persons believed to be real, which nevertheless are intended to teach how the soul ought to love God. The Persian poet Jami's *Yusuf and Zuleikha* is beyond doubt such an one. Yusuf is the Joseph of the Bible, and Zuleikha is Potiphar's wife. Save for some passages in the introductory verses it appears merely to be a story of persistent human affection in which Zuleikha endures all things for her love, and comes to full enjoyment in the end after her dross has been purged away by affliction. That spiritual love was meant cannot be doubted. The same is the case with *Salaman and Absal*, though the story is more miraculous and consequently more transparently allegorical. And Nizami, another Persian poet, says plainly that in his praise of love and wine in his *Laila and Magnun* more is meant than meets the ear. For he says,

"Think not, O Khizar, thou favoured by Fortune,
That when I praise wine I mean the juice of the grape.
I mean that wine which raiseth me above myself,
That is the wine with which I would furnish my banquet.
'My cup-bearer' is to perform my vow to God;
'My morning draught from the tavern' is the wine of self-oblivion.
By Heaven, so long as I have enjoyed existence,
Never hath the tip of my lip been stained by wine."

Again, speaking of the nature of poetry, he says,

"The mystic word which is veiled in poetry
Is the shadow of that which is veiled in prophecy.
* * * * * * * * *
These two neighbours are intimates of one friend.
This is the kernel, that is the rind."

Similarly no reader of the *Gita Govinda* of Jayadaeva as it is translated by Sir Edward Arnold, a rendering from which the most erotic portions are omitted, can fail to see that spiritual as contrasted with earthly love is there the real subject. De Sacy, Kosegarten, and others of the great Orientalists of the beginning of the century, frankly recognised this, but it has since then become the fashion to minimise the mystic element, to recognise it as present only when it cannot possibly be ignored. This has been the case especially with scholars who have been mainly conversant with Western languages and modes of thought. To them it has seemed impossible that sane men could use the minutest details of terrestrial love-making to represent the communion of the soul with God. This was largely Edward Fitzgerald's opinion. But Tholuck, who early in life made a very careful study of Oriental mysticism, gives us the result of his researches in the following paragraph of his *Ssufismus* (Berlin, 1821, p. 304). After referring to the metaphor, familiar to readers of the Bible, by which God is spoken of as the husband of the people, he continues, "Jam haec figura, generatim apud Muhammedanos haud infrequens, tantopere Ssufiis solemnis facta est et familiaris, ut non solum Deum constanter puellae nomine celebrarent aut amicae aut amici aut pueri, sed adeo singulas ejus virtutes laudibus ornarent sub nominibus singularum venustae praestantiarum puellae

ejusdemque membrorum illorum quae gratia maxime conspicua sunt, verbo omnia quae de amore valent inter mortales in Deum ab iis accommodabantur." Goethe too, with his singular poetic insight, which makes him unique among those who knew no Oriental tongue as an interpreter of Oriental poetry, says of Jelal-eddin Rumi: "his works have a somewhat motley look; he deals in stories, fairy tales, parables, legends, anecdotes, examples, problems, in order to make plausible a mystic doctrine of which he cannot give any clear account even to himself." There can, therefore, be no question that however repulsive it may be to Western minds in our modern day, poems like the 45th Psalm and the Song of Songs *may* be adumbrating heavenly love even in their most sensuous utterances. The examples we have given, and the quotations from Derwish songs in Lane's *Modern Egyptians* (vol. ii. p. 173), are more than sufficient to shew this. That they really have this meaning is not thereby proved, but the possibility of such an intention in these poems cannot be simply ruled out, as it is by many commentators. The truth is, we have here one of those cases in which the radical difference between the Eastern and the Western mind has to be taken into account. If Hafiz had been a Western man it would simply be absurd to suppose that "wine and love mean always to him the visionary's ecstasy, and the yearning for union with the divine essence." But since he was an Oriental that supposition has to be seriously faced. Mr Walter Leaf in his Introduction to his charming "*Versions from Hafiz*," London, 1898, feels that; and his reply to the question whether love and wine have always a religious meaning is worth pondering. "A glance at such a spontaneous and simple Spring song as No. 10 here translated will shew that to force such a view in all cases is an outrage alike upon the muse and nature. On the other hand certain odes such as Nos. 8 and 11 are susceptible of none but a mystic interpretation. Between these extremes lie the majority of the odes, where the possibility of an allegorical significance may be admitted in varying degree. The truth is that sensuality and mysticism are twin moods of the mind, interchanging in certain natures with an inborn ease and celerity, mysterious only to

those who have confined their study of human nature to the conventional and the common-place. Hardly conscious themselves of the accepted antithesis, such carnal-spiritual minds delight to express themselves in terms of spontaneous ambiguity, for this very ambiguity lies at the root of their being." As contrasted with occidental poets and thinkers, orientals of every nation have more of this carnal-spiritual element in them, hence it has always been possible for Easterns really to enjoy in the way of religious figure and metaphor that which is totally abhorrent to any but corrupted Western minds. Moreover the Pantheism of the Sufis was by no means necessary for the production of this sensual-religious state of mind. Pantheism gave it a particular turn, but it was innate in the Hebrews for instance, who may once, perhaps, have been polytheists but were never pantheists. Their continual leaning to the sensual religious rites of the carnal-religious Canaanite worship is a clear proof of this, and consequently those are in error who dismiss the Sufis and their poetry because of their Pantheism or their late date as having no possible analogy in Hebrew thought and literature. It is neither Pantheism nor date which is the root of the matter here, but that carnal-spiritual mind which is seen in the Canaanites and was the constant weakness of Israel. That is the explanation of such passages as Ezek. xxiii, and if for other reasons the allegorical application of what seem mere natural love ecstasies in the Song of Solomon were permissible, it is here we should look for an explanation of the seeming anomaly. Intensely passionate devotion even to a personal God would in such minds express itself so.

That such an origin for parts of Scripture would not necessarily entangle in the same carnal-spirituality those who accepted them in the purely spiritual sense is obvious. After the first movement of surprise and discomfort, the mind ceases to dwell on the simile, and becomes absorbed in the thing signified. In minds to which this mingling of the spiritual and sensuous is alien, the higher passion burns out all that lower element which was originally there; till it is no more seen. All that is left is the passion of love for the Highest, and that has attracted to

this book some of the finest and many of the purest minds of the Christian Church. From Origen and Bernard on to our own day many of those who have felt the passion of a pure love for God have turned to this book for the words which express their feelings, yet we are asked to believe that nothing more need be said about this than that it was all a regrettable blunder. Budde, for example, can see in all that nothing but a mistake which has had a degrading and sensualising effect upon religion. He says the allegorical interpretation "has also caused religious injury, since innumerable exalted spirits and movements have, in good faith, introduced from this book into their Christianity a highly dangerous element of extreme sensuality." (*New World*, March, 1894, p. 76.) It may be doubted whether this has been so to any large extent, and as he gives no indication where instances of such depravation are to be found, this grave indictment seems to lack support. On the other hand there are numerous commentaries on the Song in which nothing but the passion of delight in God finds expression. That certainly has not been evil, and if the presence of this book in the Canon has been in any degree the cause or the occasion of the persistence of that feeling in the Church, then its presence there would be amply justified on other grounds than those on which we have already seen it to be justified. There are, of course, many in the Church, as in every great association of men there are many, who have no enthusiasm in them; and to such men warm feeling would be a kind of portent were it not so ridiculous. Such men view with suspicion any profession of warm personal love to God and the zeal that it brings, and point with warning finger to the not infrequent falls of those who profess to feel it. But neither the scorn of such minds, nor the failures and falls of enthusiasts, can shake the fact that the Christian faith without this element is in itself defective, and has in it none of that contagious quality which ought to be its great characteristic. Nor without it can religion resist infection from without. In truth the gravest defect of modern conventional Christianity is that it has in it far less of this passionate *love* for God than it ought to have. If religion is to be kept high, if it is to become a support to men

and a joy as it ought to be, this element especially needs continual reinforcement. Passion in our devotion to God, love more personal and absorbing than the highest earthly love, ought to be a constant element in man's relation to God. If high and worthy thoughts are to hold the human heart, and heroism is to characterise the action of the Church, that can only be when it contains a large number of those to whom love in its absorbing, purifying, uniting power becomes the central thing, the very heart, of their relation to God. When therefore we find, as we certainly do find, that the Song of Solomon was probably received into the Canon mainly in the sense which made it a text-book of the love of God to the Church or the individual soul, and of its reciprocal love to God; if we find that it has from the earliest times edified the Church by inspiring some of its finest minds and many of its most saintly lovers of God to the fullest expression of their highest thoughts; if we find that more than any other book of Scripture it has kept men in mind of the fact that their highest moments, the moments when earthly love has lost all its carnality and all its selfishness, and has become a pure flame of utter devotion, are typical of what the relation between the soul and God ought to be, then it does seem unduly bold to deny that the author may have intended the more recondite spiritual reference as well as the more obvious ethical one. But on the other hand, there cannot be any doubt that the allegorical interpretation, freed as it has been from any connexion with the basis of fact or story on which it was meant to rest, has wandered often into the region of the merely fanciful, sometimes even into that of the irrational. It has however always retained this element, that the earthly love depicted here is a mere shadow, or reflection, or adumbration of the love which subsists between God and His own people, whether collectively or singly. If that alone were to be taken as its spiritual teaching, the use of the book as a text for meditations on this heavenly love would fall into line with such utterances as that of St Paul in Eph. v. 32 and 2 Cor. xi. 2.

§ 7. *History of the Allegorical Interpretation.*

The original impulse to read the Song as an allegory undoubtedly came from the Jews. When we first hear of the book being discussed, i.e., about the year 90 A.D., at the Synod of Jamnia, the extravagant praise bestowed upon it by Aqiba shews that he understood it allegorically. In the Mishnah (*Yadayim* iii. 5) we read that he said: "No Israelite has ever doubted that the Song of Songs defiles the hands," i.e. is inspired and canonical, "for the whole world does not outweigh the day in which the Song of Songs was given to Israel. All the *Kethubim* are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holiest of all." But we have still clearer proof that he did so in the fact stated in *Tosef. Sanhed.* c. 12, that he pronounced an anathema upon anyone who should sing it at banquets in the manner of a profane song. To him the bride was the Jewish people, while Solomon represented God, and the book was supposed to deal with the history of Israel till the times of the Messiah. This is the view represented by the Targum, and the earliest Christian expositors simply took it over, substituting for God and Israel, Christ and the Church. *Hippolytus*, the first Christian commentator on the Song (*c.* A.D. 225), does so[1]. With *Origen* too this is the primary view; but he adds to it that the bride is also, and perhaps in the first place, the soul created in the image of God. In one passage he says that the Song celebrates the union of the Church with Christ, or of the soul with the *Logos* (the Word) of God. The meaning of this latter union is this. When the soul turns from the vanity and transitoriness of earthly things and longs after the Son of God whose glory it has recognised, then the *Logos* in divine pity takes up His dwelling in it, as He has promised in John xiv. 23, and unites Himself with it. (Riedel, p. 60.) Both of Origen's views took root in the Church, but the identification of the bridegroom and the bride with Christ and the Church became the predominant one. *Athanasius*

[1] Cf. Riedel, *Die Auslegung des Hohenliedes in der Jüdischen Gemeinde und der Griechischen Kirche*, pp. 47 ff.

(A.D. 296—373), the great champion of the orthodox Christology, found his dominating thought in the book; his verdict being that it is an epithalamium in celebration of the marriage of Him who is the beloved of God to human flesh. The book is full, he says, of dialogues between the Son of God and the human race; sometimes between men in general and Christ; sometimes between Him and His ancient people; sometimes between Him and the Gentile Church; sometimes between the Gentiles and Jerusalem; and sometimes between ministering angels and men. This entirely original view was not, however, taken up by others. *Gregory of Nyssa* (A.D. 331—396) was almost certainly acquainted with Origen's works on the Song. But he takes up an independent position to some extent. He drops the Church almost altogether, and regards the soul of the individual perfect Christian as the bride, and the *Logos* as the bridegroom. Sometimes, however, he makes the bridegroom to be God Himself. In form, this is practically Origen's third and final view; but there is in Gregory a preparation for the mystic exegesis of the Middle Ages. He goes beyond Origen, too, in the ascetic colouring he gives to the book, for he continually sets up 'apathy' as the moral ideal, because by 'apathy' man becomes like God who is exalted above all that is material. That is to say, the soul which finds its highest enjoyment in the true knowledge of God, must be withdrawn from disturbance by that which does not truly exist into a passionless state, which removes it from all contact with the material. *Jerome* (A.D. 331—420) also followed Origen, and introduced his earlier work to the western world by translating it. His view was that the bride and the bridegroom were Christ and the Church, or Christ and the soul. *Augustine* (A.D. 354—430) agreed with Jerome in accepting the allegorical exegesis, but restricted the meaning to the union of Christ and the Church.

So far there had been a kind of succession from Origen onwards, but this harmony was broken by *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, a famous exegete of the school of Antioch (360—429). He shewed in his commentary the sounder exegetical instinct which distinguished Antioch by giving the book a historical reference.

His work has perished, but it was made a charge against him that he understood the Song literally. According to extracts from a writing of his on the Song of Solomon, given in the Acts of the Fifth Oecumenical Council, he held that the poem was written by Solomon to annoy and defy those who objected to his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and to please her after an estrangement which this objection had caused. The theory is certainly not a very happy one in itself, but it shewed sounder judgement than many of the comments of the allegorical school. Riedel (*op. cit.* p. 95) suggests that had it occurred to Theodore to take the earthly love of Solomon as a type of the heavenly love of Christ to the Church he would probably have adopted that explanation. But that was in his time impossible, because all parties in the Church then held virginity to be the Christian ideal, and would have shrunk equally from making love or marriage a type of the relation of Christ to the Church.

Yet greatly as Theodore was reverenced by his pupils and friends, this bold rejection of what had been generally accepted and made sacred by the tendencies of the time and by monkish asceticism, was strongly protested against. *Chrysostom* (347—407), who had been called the bright consummate flower of the school of Antioch, accepted in his moderate way the allegorical interpretation of Origen: while *Theodoret* (386—457) deliberately wrote against Theodore's interpretation, and fell back upon views which were substantially those of Origen. In support of these he quoted the earlier fathers, Eusebius of Caesarea, Origen, Cyprian of Carthage, Basil in his commentary on Proverbs, both Gregories, Diodorus of Tarsus, and Chrysostom. For him the bridegroom is Christ, the bride the Church. But he is true to the principles of the school of Antioch in that while Origen is prepared to allegorise the whole Bible equally, he reserves that method for the Song and such passages as the 45th Psalm, which he ascribes to David and regards as the possible model for the Song of Solomon. But the general allegorising of Origen is again carried to extravagance by *Cyril of Alexandria* (390—444), who explains the palanquin in the Song to mean the cross, the purple cushion as the purple garment in which the Saviour was mocked, the nuptial crown

as the crown of thorns, etc. All the while there must have been an undercurrent of opposition to this fantastic extravagance. Otherwise the polemical tone of its supporters would be inexplicable. But at the second Trullan Council A.D. 692, the exegesis of the orthodox fathers was made binding for the future, and as that Council was acknowledged in the East, all independent comment on our book ceased in the Eastern Church.

In the Middle Ages, owing to a variety of causes, the more deeply religious minds turned to mysticism, and the Song of Solomon became the text-book of their mystic approach to God. Loosed as it had been by the patristic exegesis from all historical or literal interpretation, it lent itself to the purpose of those who sought an escape from the hard systematising of religion as knowledge, which scholasticism favoured, in striving after a direct union of the soul with God. Perhaps the finest specimen of the exegesis so produced is St Bernard of Clairvaux's eighty sermons on the first two chapters. The spirit of it is best expressed by a sentence from another treatise of his, "The cause of loving God is God, and the mode is to love without measure." Commenting upon the words, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth' (Serm. vii. 2) he says "Who says this? The bride. Who is she? The soul thirsting for God. But I set forth diverse affections in order that that which especially belongs to the bride may be more clearly brought to light. If a man is a slave he trembles at the presence of God, if he is a servant he looks for something at the hand of God, if he is a disciple he gives ear to Him as a master, if a son he honours Him as a father, but she who demands a kiss loves. This passion of love excels among the gifts of nature, especially when it returns to its origin which is God, and there are no names so sweet to express the sweet affections of the Word and the soul as these of bridegroom and bride, seeing that these have all things in common, have nothing which either claims, nothing in which the other has no share." *Aquinas* (1225—1274), too, who during his last illness had visions of God which made all that he had previously written of no account in comparison, turned in his last hours to the dictation of a commentary on the Canticles. It may be, as Dean Farrar says in his *History of Interpretation*,

p. 257, that the monkish commentaries on this book were unwholesomely numerous, and that the mystic interpretation degenerated in meaner hands into a style of language of which it would be charitable to say nothing more than that it is too poetically sensuous for any commentary on holy writ. Nevertheless there remains from the Middle Ages and from later times a mass of comment, mystic in the best sense, which has enriched the literature of theology in the noblest way, though it may not have had any very intimate connexion with the real meaning of the text upon which it is founded.

But the question remains whether the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs is likely to persist in the Church, now that its spiritual reference is recognised as in some sort only secondary, and its ethical meaning has been made clear. That may be doubted, and for several reasons. In the first place, the introduction of the sensual praises of Solomon and the women of the hareem, which form the necessary foil to the fidelity and devotion of the Shulammite and her lover, and give to the ethical signification of the book point and force, becomes a disturbing and distracting element when the book is used as a text-book of spiritual love. The admixture of this carnal imagery with the more spiritual passion of the bride and her lover has grown repulsive to us as it could not be formerly. In the second place, it is not necessary to understand the Song allegorically in order to find texts for any impulse which earthly love can give to the love of God. There is, in both the Old Testament and the New, a series of passages which completely answer that purpose, apart altogether from our book. Such are Hos. i—iii, Isaiah lxii. 5, Jerem. ii. 2, in the Old Testament; and from the New Testament one gathers the impression that these and similar passages in the prophets, and those Psalms in which the "I" who prays and speaks, and between whom and God the most intimate communion of love is assumed to exist, is the community, had filled the whole mind of the early Church with the thought that God in Christ was the husband of the Church. For example, St Paul speaking to the Corinthian Christians (2 Cor. xi. 2) says, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I

might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." Again, in Eph. v. 31, 32, he says:—"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church." But the thought is not confined to St Paul. In the Apocalypse (xxi. 2) we read:—"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." Further in Matt. ix. 15 our Lord Himself uses a bridal metaphor in the words, "Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast." Lastly, John the Baptist, in looking forward to the relation of the coming Messiah to His people says (John iii. 29), "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." Along this line all that needs to be said on the analogy between divine and human love can be worthily and adequately said, and the Church of to-day will probably decide that in this matter it is better to follow the example of the New Testament writers, who though full of the thought that the relation between Christ and His Church was best illustrated by the most intimate and indissoluble of all human relationships, yet do not quote the Song of Solomon. But that will not discredit its use in the past, and certainly does not justify us in denying that it ever had any spiritual reference, or in asserting that the author's thoughts never rose even for a moment above the level of a poetical defence of monogamy.

§ 8. *Outline of the Book.*

According to the hypothesis we have adopted, the Song of Solomon is a series of 13 dramatic lyrics, each of which represents a scene in the story of a Shulammite maiden who had been carried off to one of Solomon's palaces. There, persecuted by the attentions of the king, and urged to love him by the women of his hareem, she remains constant to her humble country lover,

and is at length set free and returns to him. The story is told in these lyrics as by a series of pictures. They fall naturally into three groups, each of which begins with the solicitations of Solomon and his hareem, and ends with the fancied or actual appearance of the country lover to sustain and help.

The first group (ch. i. 2—iii. 5) consists of four such dramatic lyrics to which the following titles may be given.

(i) In the king's household, ch. i. 2—8.
(ii) A king's love despised, ch. i. 9—ii. 7.
(iii) The beloved comes, ch. ii. 8—17.
(iv) A dream, ch. iii. 1—5.

In (i) we have the first scene of the story. The Shulammite has been brought by the king "into his chambers," i.e. to some royal residence, perhaps in Jerusalem. She appears there among the ladies of the court who sing the praises of the king to her. She, rapt in dreams of her absent lover, only murmurs a wish that he might come and rescue her. Then, becoming more conscious of her surroundings, she turns to address the ladies, explaining that her dark and sunburnt appearance, so greatly contrasting with theirs, is not natural, but is due to the harsh treatment she has received. Thereafter, she turns to musing again, and talking with her lover in her heart, she asks aloud, where her shepherd may be found. The ladies answer her ironically.

In (ii) Solomon appears and speaks, uttering fulsome praises of her beauty. The Shulammite replies that so long as the king was busy elsewhere her love for her absent friend gave her fullest joy. It is the very perfume of her life, and all the king's praises of her charms only make her speak more rapturously of her absent lover. She contrasts their woodland resting places with the royal palace, and declares that she is a humble country flower, which cannot bloom elsewhere than in the country. Finally, grown faint from longing for her absent lover, she turns to ask refreshment and sustenance of the ladies of the court, and adjures them not to seek to kindle love which should always be spontaneous, by any unworthy or extraneous means.

In (iii) the scene has evidently changed to some royal residence

in the country. The lover, like the Shulammite herself, belongs to the northern hills; and as he appears here hurrying over the mountains to meet her, and Lebanon is mentioned shortly afterwards, we may suppose that the scene is a royal residence in or near Lebanon. The Shulammite starts up in uncontrollable agitation, imagining she hears her lover's footsteps. Her imagination proves to be reality and she addresses her companions, tracing his approach till he reaches the lattices in their wall. He speaks to her, and she, hearing him, repeats what he says (*vv.* 10—14). In reply to his desire to hear her voice, she sings a little vineyard song, and then, fearing for his safety, she exhorts him to depart till the evening, when he might more safely come.

In (iv) we have a dream which troubled her for some nights after her lover's coming. Apparently he had returned, and her agitated heart made her seek him in her dreams, but she could not find him. She tells her dream to her companions, and ends with the refrain already used at the end of (ii), which deprecates the stirring up of love before it arises spontaneously.

The second group (ch. iii. 6—vi. 3) consists also of four lyrics.

(i) The return of the king, ch. iii. 6—11.

(ii) The royal suitor, ch. iv. 1—7.

(iii) A true lover's pleading, ch. iv. 8—v. 1.

(iv) A dream, ch. v. 2—vi. 3.

In (i) of this group, king Solomon is seen from the northern residence, returning in special pomp after an absence. The Shulammite notices the approaching train, and asks what it may be (*v.* 6). In the following verses a watchman or attendant tells her that it is the litter of Solomon surrounded by his guard. He then describes the litter, and exhorts the ladies to go forth to see the king in all his splendour.

In (ii) the king appears again, paying court to the maiden. He enumerates and extols the beauties of her person in the stereotyped manner of the *wasf* or description of the bride's person, which survives still in Palestine as a part of the wedding rejoicings.

In (iii) we have a new scene in which the lover appeals to her to flee from Lebanon and the dangers there. In the remaining

verses (ch. iv. 9—16) he breaks out into a passionate expression of his love and admiration for her, and she replies, promising to do as he entreats her to do. In the last verse of this lyric the lover looks forward to their marriage with joyful anticipation, and invites his friends to the wedding feast.

In (iv) the group concludes as group (i) also does, with a dream, in which the heroine again seeks her lover. This must have taken place before she was released, probably on the night succeeding the interview with her lover. The first seven verses contain the dream. In the following verses the Shulammite, still in a state between sleeping and waking, asks the daughters of Jerusalem to tell her lost lover if they should find him that she was love-sick. In reply they ask what there is in him that moves her so much. Thereupon she gives a description of him as he dwells in her brooding imagination, and on the court ladies eagerly asking whither this model of manly beauty is gone, she replies evasively and claims her lover for herself alone.

In the last group (ch. vi. 4—viii. 14) there are five lyrics.

(i) The king fascinated, ch. vi. 4—13.
(ii) The praises of the hareem, ch. vii. 1—6.
(iii) The king and the shepherdess, ch. vii. 7—viii. 4.
(iv) Return in the might of love, ch. viii. 5—7.
(v) Reminiscences and triumphs, ch. viii. 8—14.

In (i) we have a renewed assault by Solomon. Just after the Shulammite's impassioned claim to belong to her lover only, her royal persecutor returns and bursts into praise of her physical beauty as before. She is, he says, worth all the wives and concubines he has, and he quotes the praises which these, her rivals for his love, uttered when they first saw her. From *v.* 11 onwards she explains how she came to be in the gardens where they found and carried her off on that fatal day, and recalls the whole circumstances.

In (ii) there is no indication as to who the speaker is, or where these most unreserved praises of her beauty are uttered. But they would be most fitting in the mouths of the women of the hareem as they dressed and adorned the heroine for her final interview with Solomon. The song ends with a hint that the

king is desperately in love with her, and with a laudation of the delights of love.

Song (iii) of this group, gives us the last interview of the king with the shepherdess. He grows more daring than before in vii. 8, 9 *a*, but she interrupts him there, and turns what he is saying into a reference to her lover and declares finally that she belongs to him only. The king then withdraws, and she lets her heart go out to her absent lover and calls upon him to take her back to the delights of their own simple country life at home, where she will become his wife. The ardour yet innocence of her love leads her to wish that her lover had been her brother, for in that case she might have fully expressed her affection without meeting with censure from anyone. She concludes by turning to the ladies of the court, saying farewell to them with the words, "Why should ye stir up or awake love till it please?"

In (iv) we have the return of the lovers to their village, with their hearts full of the might of their love. The circumstances are indicated by the words of the first verse, in which the villagers see them draw near, and while they are still at a distance ask who they may be. As they come nearer, the lover points out an apple-tree under which he had once found her sleeping, and then, catching sight of her birthplace, he exclaims, "Yonder thy mother was in travail with thee." She replies in the verses beginning, "Set me as a seal upon thy heart" etc., with that great panegyric of love which forms the crown and glory of the book.

In (v) the bride, in the quiet after her return, goes back in memory over all the way by which she had been led to her present happiness. In the first three verses she recalls the anxiety of her brothers lest she should bring dishonour on her family, and proudly claims that it was all quite unnecessary, that her steadfastness, which had conquered the pertinacity of the king, sufficiently proved that. Then she makes ironical remarks about Solomon and his wealth, and scornfully says he may keep his own vineyards but he shall not get hers, which she will effectually guard for herself. In the last two verses her lover calls upon her to let his comrades hear her voice,

and the poem ends with the charming picture of the maiden singing in the midst of the gardens the words she had spoken to him formerly when he had asked to hear her voice.

§ 9. *Literature.*

Literature. To go back beyond Ewald in regard to the literature on the Song of Songs would be useless. His work in its latest form is in his *Dichter des Alten Bundes*, Part II. Ed. 2, 1867. Franz Delitzsch, *Canticles and Ecclesiastes* (Eng. Tr. T. and T. Clark). 1877. Both these authors had however earlier works on the same subject, dating from 1825 and 1851 respectively. F. Hitzig, in *Kurzgef. Exeg. Hdb. zum A. T.*, 1885. C. D. Ginsburg, *The Song of Songs*, 1857. E. Renan, *Le Cantique des Cantiques*, 1860. H. Grätz, *Shir-hash-Shirim*, 1871. Reuss, *Das Alte Testament*, vol. v. 1893. J. G. Stickel, 1887. S. Oettli in Strack u. Zöcklers *Kurzgef. Comm.* 1889. C. Bruston, *La Sulammite*, 1891—94. D. Castelli, *Il Cantico dei Cantici*, 1892. J. W. Rothstein, 1893. Baethgen in *Kautzsch's Die Heilige Schrift des A. T.*, 1894. W. F. Adeney, *The Song of Solomon and the Lamentations*, in the *Expositor's Bible*, 1895. K. Budde, *Das Hohelied* in the *Kurzer Handcomm. zum A. T.*, 1898. C. Siegfried, *Hoheslied*, in the *Handcomm. zum A. T.*, 1898.

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THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THE song of songs, which *is* Solomon's. 1

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: 2

Chap. I. 1.

1. *The song of songs, which* is *Solomon's*] For the superscription, which probably comes from a later hand than that of the author, see Introduction, § 1, p. ix.

Chap. I. 2—8. In the King's Household.

The first scene from the life of the heroine called the Shulammite is contained in these verses. She has been brought by the king's command into his chambers (*v.* 4). The scene is consequently in some royal residence, probably at Jerusalem, and we have present, the Shulammite, the Jerusalem ladies of the court, and perhaps also Solomon. The ladies of the court sing the praises of the king as the object of their love, and seek to rouse the Shulammite also to admiration of him (2, 3, 4 *b*). She, rapt in dreams of her absent lover, pays no heed at first, but murmurs a wish that he might come and rescue her (4 *a*). Then, becoming conscious of her surroundings, she turns to address the ladies of the court (5, 6). Again she falls to musing, and asks her shepherd lover where he may be found (7). The ladies answer ironically (8).

2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*] It may be doubted whether this is spoken by the Shulammite of her absent lover, or by one of the ladies of the court, of Solomon. In favour of the former view, there is the likelihood that the heroine would first speak, and the change of pronoun in *v.* 3, if there be no change in the persons speaking, is abrupt. But the change of pronoun would not be altogether unnatural in any language if the person spoken of were suddenly seen approaching after the first clause had been uttered. Nor even if he were not present at all would the change be impossible; for in passionate poetry the imagination continually vivifies and gives life to its conceptions by representing the object of affection as present, though

For thy love *is* better than wine.
3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments
Thy name *is as* ointment poured forth,
Therefore do the virgins love thee.
4 Draw me, we will run after thee:
The king hath brought me *into* his chambers:
We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will remember thy love more than wine:
The upright love thee.

actually absent. Perhaps the view that the king is seen approaching and that one of the court ladies speaks is preferable. In that case it would be his kisses that would be referred to.

for thy love is *better than wine*] i.e. **thy caresses** *are better than wine*. The word *dōdhīm* is properly 'manifestations of kindness and love,' but it also means *love*. Here the former is the better translation.

3. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments*] Lit. 'For fragrance thy ointments are good,' i.e. as R.V. **Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance**. This clause is a continuance of the praise begun in *v.* 2, not the reason for it. The particle translated *because of* in the A.V. stands here in its common sense of *as to*, or *with regard to*. *Ointments* means *unguents* or *perfumes*.

the virgins] Or **maidens**. There is probably here a reference to the Shulammite, for another word would probably have been used had the women of the hareem been meant. So noble is Solomon that even maidens as unsophisticated as she loved him. Or the reference may be to young women who were about to be taken into the hareem, hardly to slave girls already there, as Grätz suggests.

4. *Draw me, we will run after thee*] Better, **Draw me after thee, that we may run**. This rendering is contrary to the Heb. accents, which connect *after thee* with *run*, but in that case it is difficult to see who are meant by *we*. By taking the words as suggested we get the maiden and her deliverer as subjects, and the next clause then does not require to be taken as a hypothetical clause, as it must be if *after thee* is connected with *run*. It is simply a statement of the dangerous position from which she calls upon her lover to deliver her.

we will be glad and rejoice in thee] These are the words of the court ladies, continuing the speech of *v.* 3.

we will remember thy love more than wine] Rather, *we will* **celebrate thy caresses** *more than wine*. *Nazkīrāh* means literally 'to commemorate,' 'to keep in memory,' but this easily passes over into the signification of praising or celebrating. Cp. Ps. xx. 7, "we will make mention of the name of Jehovah." In 1 Chron. xvi. 4 the word is used absolutely, in the meaning 'to celebrate' (R.V.), and this is perhaps the best rendering here.

the upright] Rather, *in uprightness*, R.V. margin, or *rightly*, R.V. **Rightly** *do they*, viz. the maidens, *v.* 3, *love thee*.

I *am* black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, 5
As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
Look not upon me, because I *am* black, 6
Because the sun hath looked upon me:
My mother's children were angry with me;
They made me the keeper of the vineyards;
But mine own vineyard have I not kept.
Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, 7

5. Here the Shulammite, under the inquisitive glances of the court ladies, who probably desire to see whether they have in any degree accomplished their purpose of rousing her admiration for the king, remembers her rustic appearance, and explains that the swarthy colour which is so different from theirs, is not natural or permanent, and asserts her equality in beauty.

I am *black*] Better, **swart.** The word denotes here, not blackness as of a negro or of a horse (cp. Zech. vi. 2, 6), but the ruddy or brown hue of sunburning; though with poetic exaggeration the speaker compares herself to the Bedouin tents of camel's hair, for blackness, and to the brilliantly coloured curtains of Solomon's tent, for beauty.

Kedar] i.e. *black*, was the name of a tribe of nomads whose eponymous ancestor was (Gen. xxv. 13) a son of Ishmael. They wandered in the Arabian desert towards Babylonia, and are called *Kidru* in the cuneiform inscriptions.

6. *because I* am *black*] The word for black here is a diminutive of the former word, and would be better translated **swarthy.**

the sun hath looked upon me] Rather, **hath scorched me** (R.V.).

my mother's children] Lit. **sons.** These are not, as Ewald and others conjecture, her step-brothers. They are rather her full brothers, and the pathos of her case is deepened by that fact. Even her own brothers, in their anger, set her menial tasks. From there being mention only of her mother and her brothers, and from the authority her brothers exercised over her, we may infer that her father was dead. This is one of the undesigned touches which compel us to assume a connected story of some kind as a background for the book. Those who deny any connexion between the songs and assert that they are only the fragments of a professional singer's *répertoire* cannot satisfactorily explain this reference.

but *mine own vineyard have I not kept*] i.e. she did not take fitting care of her own beauty; or it may be that the reference is to the carelessness which had brought her into her present danger. The former is more probable since she affirms most strongly (cp. viii. 10 and 12) that in the sense of her person she has kept her 'vineyard.'

7, 8. *v.* 7 is spoken by the Shulammite, asking her lover where she will find him at noon, and *v.* 8 is the mocking comment of the daughters of Jerusalem. Martineau, indeed, supposes that the lover actually appears here, at the king's residence in Jerusalem, and she asks him where she

Where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest
at noon:
For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the
flocks of thy companions?

8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,

can find him feeding his flocks. But that seems unmeaning if he was a shepherd of En-gedi, as Martineau supposes; and in any case, he would not be feeding his flocks in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Budde supposes that this is a song put into the mouth of the newly married couple, in order that the marriage, which really was a mere matter of arrangement, should be made to appear to be the result of previous affection. This, therefore, is an account of a lovers' meeting before marriage. But if the universal custom was to arrange marriages in this way it seems obvious that no one would wish to make the thing appear otherwise, in fact it would be a breach of the *convenances* to hint at such a thing. There seems no alternative but to suppose that the speaker is here musing upon her absent lover and asks aloud where she could find him. She longs to go to seek him. Some however take the two verses to be a reference to the past, while Oettli supposes them to be an interlude brought in to shew who the two lovers are.

7. *where thou feedest*, &c.] Rather, *where thou wilt pasture* (thy flock), *where thou will make* (them) *rest at noon.* 'Feedest' is in English ambiguous, but the Heb. word is not. Cp. Gen. xxxvii. 16, "Tell me, I pray thee, where they feed (their flocks)."

as one that turneth aside] Vulg. *ne vagari incipiam.* The LXX, ὡς περιβαλλομένη=*as one veiling herself*, is more correct. The Heb. of the text is *kĕ 'ōṭyāh*, which is the participle fem. Qal for the usual *'ōṭāh* (but perhaps it should be *'ōṭiyyāh*; cp. Ges. Kautzsch *Gramm.* § 75 *v*) of the verb *'āṭāh*=to fold, or pack together; cp. Is. xxii. 17, "He will wrap thee up closely" (R.V.); and Jer. xliii. 12, "He shall array himself" (literally wrap himself) "with the land of Egypt"; then 'to veil' or 'cover,' and this must be its meaning here; *like one veiling herself.* But what is the significance of her veiling herself? Delitzsch and others understand the reference here to be to the custom of harlots to disguise themselves, as Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 15, "He thought her to be an harlot, for she had covered her face," but there is no plausible reason given why she should veil herself, especially if this interpretation could be put upon her doing so. Others, taking the text to be correct, make the meaning to be 'as one mourning or forsaken,' then *'ōṭyāh* must have become a technical term from which the original meaning had almost wholly been stripped. The Syriac, the Vulgate, and Symm. apparently read, 'wanderer,' transposing the letters and making *'ōṭiyyāh* into *tō'iyyāh*, the participle of the verb 'to wander.' Archdeacon Aglen's suggestion in Ellicott's *Commentary for English Readers*, that as the word *'āṭāh* in Is. xxii. 17 is given the meaning of 'erring,' or 'wandering about,' by the Rabbinic commentators, probably the idea they had in their mind was that a person with the head wrapped up has difficulty in finding his

Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

I have compared thee, O my love, 9
To a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

way, and thus, even without any transposition of the letters, the word might come to be translated 'wandering,' is interesting and plausible. He would translate *as one blindfold*. This seems the best rendering.

8. *by the footsteps of the flock*] i.e. hard on the footsteps, in the very tracks of the sheep, until she reaches the place where the shepherds' tents are set up, and there she will find him.

Chap. I. 9—Chap. II. 7. A King's Love despised.

In this scene Solomon presses his love upon the Shulammite for the first time; but in reply to his endeavours to win her she always utters praises of her absent lover. She contrasts their humble woodland resting-place with the royal palace, and declares herself to be a modest country flower which cannot bloom elsewhere than in the country. Finally, grown love-sick at the thought of her lover, she turns to the ladies of the court, beseeching them to restore her strength, and adjures them not to seek to kindle love, which should always be spontaneous, by any unworthy or extraneous means.

9. *O my love*] Rather, **O my friend**; cp. the use of *ami* in French between lovers. This word *ra'yāh* is found only in the Song of Solomon, except once in the plural in Judges xi. 37, where Jephthah's daughter says "I and my companions," and in that case there is an alternative reading. It is used in the Song indiscriminately by Solomon and by the Shulammite's true lover.

a company of horses] Here the A.V. follows the Vulgate, which has *equitatus*; and that might be the meaning as the *fem.* may be a collective (cp. Ges. K. *Gramm.* § 122 *s*). Oettli, however, suggests that a favourite mare is meant, and in that case we should render *to my mare in Pharaoh's chariots have I compared thee*. The plural, *chariots*, makes a slight difficulty, but it may be meant to indicate that this favourite steed was driven in various chariots. This reference to Egyptian chariots and horses is specially Solomonic (cp. 1 Kings x. 26—29), as he first introduced the horse and chariot as a regular part of the army of Israel. To us this may seem a very unbecoming simile, but in the East women are held in lighter esteem than with us, and the horse in higher esteem. Arabic poets often use such comparisons for the women they love. But perhaps there is intended here a hint of the quality of the king's affection. Cp. Tennyson, *Locksley Hall*,

"He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its
novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse."

10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows *of jewels*,
Thy neck with chains *of gold*.
11 We will make thee borders of gold
With studs of silver.

12 While the king *sitteth* at his table,
My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

10. *Thy cheeks are comely*] The LXX have τί ὡραιώθησαν σιαγόνες σου, 'How comely are thy cheeks,' which would be a very good reading.

with rows of jewels] Most probably these are strings, either of beads formed of the precious metals, or of precious stones, hanging down over the cheeks in loops. R.V. renders '*plaits of hair*.' Archdeacon Aglen very aptly quotes from Olearius the following sentence: "Persian ladies use as head-dress two or three rows of pearls, which pass round the head and hang down the cheeks, so that their faces seem set in pearls." He also notes that Lady Mary Wortley Montague describes the Sultana Hafitan as wearing round her head-dress four strings of pearls of great size and beauty.

with chains of gold] Rather, **with strings of jewels**, as R.V. The word occurs here only in the O.T., but cognate words in Aramaic and Arabic shew that it means an ornament of beads or jewels strung together. Probably it is the *'iqd* or necklace described and figured by Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, vol. II. p. 319. He says the necklaces mostly worn by ladies are of diamonds or pearls.

11. *We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver*] Rather, **strings of golden beads** *will we make thee, with* **points** *of silver*. These more splendid adornments will be substituted for her modest country ornaments.

12—14. The Shulammite replies to Solomon's wooing.

12. *While the king* sitteth *at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*] R.V. **sat...sent forth**. So long she says as the king was on his divan her spikenard gave forth its perfume.

his table] Heb. *mēsabh* or *mēsēbh*, probably a divan or seat set round a room. Ewald and Delitzsch, following the usual rendering of 1 Sam. xvi. 11, translate "a round table," but see *Oxf. Heb. Lex.* Here it would mean a seat, in some public reception-room probably, in any case outside the hareem. The meaning seems here to be that so long as Solomon was absent from her, her *nard*, "a figure," as Delitzsch says, "for the happiness of love," gave forth its fragrance. She was then free to let her thoughts go out to her rustic lover. In the succeeding verses her thoughts of him are compared to perfumes, myrrh and henna flowers; here the delight she had in thinking of him is likened to nard and its fragrance.

my spikenard] Heb. *nērd*. Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 485, says, "Spikenard or nard is exclusively an Indian product, procured from the *Nardostachys jatamansi*, a plant of the order *Valerianaceae*, growing in the Himalaya mountains, in Nepal and Bhotan. It has many hairy

A bundle of myrrh *is* my well-beloved unto me; 13
He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
My beloved *is* unto me *as* a cluster of camphire 14
In the vineyards of En-gedi.

spikes shooting from one root. It is from this part of the plant that the perfume is procured, and prepared simply by drying it."

sendeth forth] This should be, **gave forth.**

13. *A bundle*] From Is. iii. 20 we learn that Israelite women were accustomed to carry perfume boxes. The bundle of myrrh here would seem to be something of that kind, probably a small bag with myrrh resin in it.

myrrh] Heb. *mōr*. It is the *Balsamodendron myrrha* of botanists, a low, thorny, ragged-looking tree, something like an acacia. It is found in Arabia Felix. "A viscid white liquid oozes from the bark when punctured, which rapidly hardens when exposed to the air, and becomes a sort of gum, which in this simple state is the myrrh of commerce. The wood and bark emit a pungent aromatic odour." Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 365.

he shall lie all night] Rather, as R.V., **that lieth.** The clause is the ordinary relative sentence with the relative pron. suppressed, by which the attributive participle in English is expressed in Heb., and the translation should be, *a bundle of myrrh lying all night between my breasts is my love to me*, i.e. the thought of him abides with her and refreshes her heart as a perfume bag of myrrh would do. Cp. Shelley,

> "Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
> Are heaped for the beloved's bed,
> And so thy thoughts when thou art gone
> Love itself shall slumber on."

The translation of the A.V. is refuted by the parallelism. In the second half of verse 14, *in the vineyards of En-gedi* is an attribute of the *cluster of henna-flowers*, and so in verse 13, *lying between my breasts* is an attribute of the *bundle of myrrh*.

14. *camphire*] R.V. **henna-flowers**, the *Lawsonia inermis* or henna plant, from which Eastern women get the reddish yellow colour with which they stain their hands and feet (Tristram, *op. cit.* p. 340). It has a strongly perfumed flower which takes the form of yellowish white clusters. It is found to-day in Palestine *only* at En-gedi.

the vineyards of En-gedi] Martineau seems to take these words as an indication that the lover had his vineyards there, but this is highly improbable. En-gedi means *the fountain of the kid*, and the place still retains the name Ain Jidy. To this day the rocks and precipices above and about the well are frequented by wild goats. "The plain of En-gedi," says Dr Porter in *Murray's Guide*, "is a rich plain about half a mile square, sloping very gently from the declivity of the mountains to the shore of the Dead Sea, and is shut in on the North by the cliffs of Wady Sudeir, which are the highest along the whole Western coast. About one mile up the mountain side, and at an elevation of some 400 feet above the plain, is the fountain from which the place gets its name.

15 Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair;
Thou *hast* doves' eyes.

16 Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
Also our bed *is* green.

17 The beams of our house *are* cedar,
And our rafters of fir.

The water is pure and sweet though the temperature is as high as 81 degrees Fahr. The plain is very fertile, and anciently its vineyards, and palm groves, and balsam plants were celebrated, but now none of these are to be seen there."

15—17. In these verses the king continues his praises of the Shulammite, while she continues to think only of her absent lover. In *v.* 15 the pronouns and the corresponding adjectives are feminine, while in *v.* 16 they are masculine. Consequently in *v.* 15 Solomon is represented as addressing the Shulammite, while in *v.* 16 the Shulammite speaks, addressing however not Solomon but her absent lover.

15. *thou* hast *doves' eyes*] Rather, as R.V., **thine eyes are (as) doves**, i.e. are dove-like. As a rule in such comparisons the particle of comparison *ke*=as stands before the predicate (see Ges. *Gramm.* 141 *d*, note). But this form is more emphatic. The absence of the particle does not consequently compel us to translate as Oettli following the LXX does, *thy eyes are doves*, i.e. are glancing and shimmering in various colours, so as to resemble doves. That seems an improbable simile; more probably it is the innocence which is associated with doves' eyes which is the point of comparison.

16. *our bed* is *green*] R.V. rightly, **our couch**. She recalls the green sward of the meadows, or possibly some leafy arbour where she had reclined with her beloved. Siegfried would understand the words of the marriage bed, sprinkled with sweet smelling substances; but that is incompatible with the following verse, and is moreover not supported by Ps. xcii. 10, where the word translated 'green' here is rendered by 'fresh,' for in all probability it ought to be translated 'green' there also, since the best kind of olive oil is green. Cp. Riehm's *Hdwb.* II. p. 1123.

17. Render, **The beams of our houses are cedars, and our rafters are cypresses.** The meaning is not that their houses are built of cedar, but that the cedar trees and fir trees form the roof over their heads as they seek shelter under them. Perhaps the plural *houses* may be significant. They have not one, but many palaces in the forest glades. The country maiden speaks as a country maiden whose couch was often in the green grass, and who had cedars and cypresses for walls and roof at her meetings with her lover.

our rafters] Heb. *rāchîṭēnu*. This word is not found elsewhere, and its meaning can only be conjectured. The context suggests some portion of the woodwork of the roof, hence the 'rafters' of the A.V. LXX, φατνώματα=*laquearia*, *lacunaria*, i.e. 'panelled ceilings.'

I am the rose of Sharon, 2
And the lily of the valleys.

As the lily among thorns, 2
So *is* my love among the daughters.

of fir] **are cypresses.** The form of the Heb. word here is *bĕrōthīm*, which is supposed to be the North Palestinian pronunciation for the usual *berōshīm*. The Vulgate everywhere renders *abies* = pine, the LXX and Syriac give in many places 'cypress.' But the cedar and cypress were trees of Lebanon, and the most valued among them, and Solam, at the S. W. foot of Jebel-ed-Dahi (Oettli), was not very far from the forests of Lebanon. Probably therefore the cypress is meant.

Ch. ii. **1, 2.** In *v.* 1 the bride speaks, describing herself as a humble meadow flower unfit to be in such a luxurious place as that in which she now finds herself, and in *v.* 2 Solomon replies.

1. Render, **I am a crocus of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.**

the rose of Sharon] The Heb. word *chabhatstseleth*, which occurs besides only in Is. xxxv. 1, can hardly mean a rose. The LXX, Vulg., and Targ. to Is. xxxv. 1 translate it 'lily,' but as we have *shōshannāh* for lily in the next clause, it is probably some other flower. The Targum here gives *narqōs rattīb*, 'the green narcissus,' but Gesen. *Thes.* prefers the Syriac translation, *Colchicum autumnale* or *meadow saffron*, a meadow flower like the crocus, white and violet in colour, and having poisonous bulbs. This is the most probable of the proposed identifications, though Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 476, decides for the sweet-scented narcissus, *Narcissus tazetta*, a native of Palestine, and a flower of which the natives are passionately fond. While it is in flower it is to be seen in all the bazaars, and the men as well as the women at that season always carry two or three blossoms which they are constantly smelling.

Sharon] is generally supposed to be the great plain of Sharon to the S. of Carmel on the Mediterranean coast, stretching from Caesarea to Joppa. But the word probably means 'a plain,' and might, consequently, be applied by the inhabitants of any district to the plain in their neighbourhood. This is supported by the fact that Eusebius states that the district from Tabor to the Lake of Gennesaret was called Sharon, so here we may render either *a crocus of Sharon*, or *of the plain*, as in the LXX.

the lily] Rather, **a lily.** *Shōshannāh* must be a red flower; cp. v. 13, "His lips are like lilies." Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 464, identifies it with the scarlet *Anemone coronaria*. It is found everywhere, on all soils and in all situations. It meets every requirement of the allusions in Canticles and is one of the flowers called *susan* by the Arabs.

2. Solomon replies, turning her modest comparison into an exaltation of her above the ladies of the palace by saying, "My friend is indeed a lily and she is out of place, but only because the palace ladies are as thistles in comparison." *Chōach* is perhaps a thistle here. Tristram, *Fauna and Flora of Palestine*, p. 336, says it is *Notobasis Syriaca*,

3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So *is* my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.
4 He brought me to the banqueting house,
And his banner over me *was* love.

a peculiarly strong and noxious thistle. But probably *chōach* meant many plants, and that the word does not always mean a thistle is shewn by its use in Prov. xxvi. 9, "as a *chōach* that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard," where something of the nature of a brier must be intended. Cp. also the parable of Jehoash in 2 Kings xiv. 9.

3—7. In these verses the Shulammite replies, but turns her thoughts away from her royal lover to her betrothed, and compares him as contrasted with other young men to a fruitful and shady *tappūach* tree among the other trees of the wood.

3. *the apple tree*] The Heb. word is *tappūach*. Tristram, *Fauna and Flora of Palestine*, p. 294, takes it to mean the apricot; while Delitzsch, in his commentary on Proverbs, suggests the citron or orange, but neither view has more than a slight support. As between *apple*, which is held to be the tree meant, by Löw, Prof. Robertson Smith, Dr Post in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, and Prof. Driver on Joel i. 12, and *quince*, which is supported by the authors of the article 'Apple' in the *Encycl. Bibl.* and others, it is difficult to choose. A strong argument against the quince is contained in the last clause of the verse. The quince is not sweet, but rather bitter, and as the reference here is to the fruit in its natural state, we cannot get over the difficulty by saying that it is delicious when sweetened. Dr Post, who is a medical man living in Syria, remarks that to-day sick persons almost invariably ask the doctor if they may have an apple, and if he objects they urge their case with the plea that they want it only to smell. This is strikingly parallel to what we have in *v.* 5, and on the whole we would decide for *apple* tree.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight] Lit. *In his shadow I delighted and sat down.* The A.V. gives the sense of the Heb. accurately, as the two verbs are intended here to express one idea, and the second verb, as is usual in such constructions, is the principal one.

his fruit] i.e. the joy of loving converse with him.

4. *He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love*] Such expressions as 'banqueting house' and 'his banner' suggest a regal magnificence which could not belong to any kindness or hospitality which a rustic lover could shew to his loved one. But the first expression is simply house of wine, which has no such necessary association with splendour as 'banqueting house.' The name might, as far as we know, be applied to any place where wine was hospitably set forth for guests, and some plausibly suggest that it means here some tent in the vineyard where the watchers refreshed and rested themselves. On the other hand, it is quite possible that *Beth-hayyayin*

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: 5
For I *am* sick of love.

may be a proper name (cp. *Beth-hakkerem*, 'house of the vineyard,' Jer. vi. 1). Bruston renders it so, and suggests that it is the name of the village, near the Shulammite's village, where the shepherd lover dwelt. Others think that it is to be taken figuratively, as meaning that his love intoxicates her. The word translated 'banner' is *deghel*, and it was supposed to be used of the banner which preceded the tribes in their march through the wilderness. But this has been disputed on plausible grounds by Gray in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1898, who thinks the word means 'company' in Numbers ii. 3 and x. 14. Cheyne, however, *Jew. Quart. Rev.*, Jan. 1899, would retain 'banner' as a possible meaning of the word, and if we do so the meaning of the phrase may be, as Gesen. *Thes.* suggests, "I follow the banner of love which my friend bears before me as soldiers follow the military standard and never desert it." If the 'house of wine' be taken figuratively, as the tree with its shadow and its fruit in the previous verse must be, this gives quite a satisfactory meaning. The Shulammite was brought by her lover to the place where the wine of love was dispensed, and the standard he bore aloft was love. The best parallel to our passage is given in Lane's Arabic Dictionary *s.v.* *'uqab*, where a saying of Abu Dhu-eyb describing wine is quoted. "It has a banner which guides the generous, like as the military banner guides and attracts warriors." This gives an exact parallel and makes the simile clear. The lover is the possessor of the only wine she cares for. Cp. Ben Jonson's *Song to Celia*,

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine,
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine."

She comes to him for the 'drink divine' which she desires, and the flag which draws her and is a sign that it is there is his love. It was the custom in Arabia for the wine seller to hoist a flag and keep it flying so long as he had any wine to sell, but it may be doubted whether there is any reference to such a custom here.

5. *flagons*] The Heb. *'ashīshōth* means raisin cakes, cp. Hos. iii. 1, and is connected possibly with Arab. *'assasa*, 'to found' or 'establish,' and so 'cakes of pressed fruit.' The LXX translate *ἐν μύροις* and the Vulg. *floribus*, under the impression that the Shulammite calls for restoratives to prevent fainting, just as smelling-salts are used in our day. But that can hardly be the case, as *'ashīshōth* would not be suitable for this purpose, nor apples either, though, as we have seen, the sick desire apples for their smell. Her love and longing have brought her into a state of physical weakness, to bear up against which she needs stimulating and sustaining food. This the raisin cakes and apples would supply. The 'flagons' of the A.V. is derived from the Rabbinic commentators, cp. Ibn Ezra on this verse, "*ashīshōth*, vessels of glass full of wine." But there is no support for it.

sick of love] i.e. weakened and made faint by hope deferred and

6 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand doth embrace me.
7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please.

disappointed longing. Delitzsch's idea that she is fainting because of excessive delight is less likely. A country girl would scarcely be liable to an excess of weakness demanding restoratives of this kind from such a cause.

6. The verb here should be taken as expressing a wish. *O that his left hand were under my head, and his right hand were embracing me*: or, *His left hand would be under my head.* Cp. viii. 3, where the same words recur in a kind of refrain, and where they must unmistakeably be taken to express a wish.

7. *I charge you*] **I adjure you.**

by the roes, and by the hinds of the field] The *tsĕbhī*, 'roe,' is according to Tristram (*Fauna and Flora of Palestine*, p. 5) the gazelle, *Gazella dorcas*. He says, "It is extremely common in every part of the country S. of Lebanon. I have seen it in the Mount of Olives close to Jerusalem." The *ayyālāh* = 'hind' is the female of the *ayyāl*, which, according to Post, in Hastings' *Dict. of Bible*, is the *Cervus dama*, the true 'fallow deer.' Tristram also thinks the fallow deer is meant, or perhaps the red deer, but the latter has not been found in Palestine.

that ye stir not up, &c.] Rather, as R.V., **that ye stir not up, nor awaken love, until it please.** The adjuration does not refer to the rousing of a lover, but of the passion of love. The meaning is this. The speaker adjures the daughters of Jerusalem not to attempt any more to arouse or awake love. It should be allowed to rest until it awake of itself; and probably they are adjured by the gazelles and the hinds of the field because of the shyness and timidity of these creatures, or as Delitzsch suggests, because of their absolute freedom. The daughters of Jerusalem had been attempting to awake love for Solomon in her heart by fulsome praises of him, and she adjures them thus in order that they may cease from their vain attempt. This beautiful verse recurs at iii. 5 and viii. 4, and forms a kind of refrain which marks the close of certain sections of the book. It also expresses one of the main theses of it, viz. that a true and worthy love should owe nothing to excitements coming from without, but should be spontaneous and as unfettered as the deer upon the hills.

Chap. II. 8—17. The Beloved comes.

The scene is evidently changed from Jerusalem to some royal residence in the country. The lover, like the Shulammite herself, belongs to the northern hills; and as he appears here, it is more natural to suppose that the scene has been transferred thither than that he has come to Jerusalem. Moreover the later references to Lebanon imply this change of scene, and it is most suitable to suppose that the change

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh 8
Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
My beloved *is* like a roe or a young hart: 9
Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh forth at the windows,
Shewing himself through the lattice.

takes place here. The indirect way in which this is hinted is entirely congruous with the kind of poems we have taken these to be. The Shulammite starts up in uncontrollable agitation, imagining she hears her lover's footsteps as he hastens to her over the hills, and she addresses her companions, the court ladies, tracing his approach until he reaches the lattices in the wall, *vv.* 8 and 9. Her lover speaks to her through these, and she, hearing him, repeats what he says, *vv.* 10—14. In reply to his desire to see her and hear her voice, as she cannot make herself visible, she sings a little vineyard song, *v.* 15. In *v.* 16 she gives herself up to a loving rapture, and then, *v.* 17, fearing for her lover's safety she exhorts him to depart till the evening. Some think the bride speaks here of some past scene when her lover came to meet her, over which she is now brooding. That is possible, but the view expressed above seems preferable. In any case these verses are among the most beautiful in the book, and take their place among the perfect love verses of the world. A modern parallel may be found in Tennyson's lines,

"And all my heart went out to meet him
Coming, ere he came."

8. *The voice of my beloved*] This is the literal rendering of the Hebrew, but the word *qōl*, 'sound' or 'voice,' is often used with a following genitive as an interjection, and then 'Hark!' is the best equivalent. (See Ges. *Gramm.* § 146 *b.*) Thus in Gen. iv. 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," should be, "Hark! thy brother's blood crieth," &c. Cp. Is. xl. 3. So here, **Hark! my beloved, behold he cometh leaping over the mountains**, &c.; i.e. it is not his voice, but the sound of his feet that she hears in imagination. (Cp. Oettli.) The mountains might be those round about Jerusalem, but more probably they are the Northern hills amidst which they now are.

9. *My beloved* is *like a roe or a young hart*] Preferably, **like a gazelle or a young hart.**

our wall] The possessive pronoun here must, on the hypothesis we have adopted, refer to the Shulammite and the court ladies among whom she is. She speaks of her lover as having now arrived, as standing outside the wall and looking into the chamber.

he looketh forth at the windows] Lit. *he gazeth from the windows, glanceth from the lattices.* These phrases may mean, either that the person referred to looks out, or that he looks in. All they imply is that the person looking directs his glances from the windows, and so they may legitimately be rendered, **looketh in at the windows... glanceth through the lattices.** The allegorical interpreters all made

10 My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
11 For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over *and* gone;
12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing *of birds* is come,

the bridegroom look out from a safe and quiet dwelling into which the bride desired to come. But, obviously, when the scene actually portrayed is realised, it is seen that he is outside, seeking her, and comes close up to the windows and lattices and peers in. The word translated *glanceth* denotes glimmering, shining, and indicates that the *charakkim*='lattices' are openings narrower than windows, and the lover had come so close to them that the gleam of his eyes could be seen.

10. *My beloved spake*] Lit. *has answered* or *answers*, but the word *'ānāh* is constantly used like its Greek equivalent ἀποκρίνεσθαι, of beginning to speak when occasion seems to demand it, though no word has been previously uttered (cp. the Gospels *passim*). This is the only instance of the introduction of *he says*, in the book, and Martineau would strike the words out, but without real ground.

my love] Rather, **my friend**, see chap. i. 9, note.

11. In this and the two following verses we have one of the loveliest descriptions of the spring in Syria that was ever penned.

the winter is past] The word *sĕthāw*, used for winter, does not occur elsewhere in the O.T., but is the same as the Arabic *shitā*, which is also used in the vulgar language to denote 'rain.' The Targums on Gen. viii. 22 and Is. xviii. 6 use the word *sĕthāw* for *chōrēph*, the ordinary Heb. word for autumn and winter. Probably it denotes the cloudy season, the season of rain. This ends with the *malqōsh* or 'latter rain,' which falls in March and April; and after that for nearly six months rain is infrequent.

the rain is over and *gone*] Lit. **has passed, and is gone away**. The Heb. suggests the sweep of the rain clouds across the sky, and their disappearance from the horizon.

12. *the flowers appear on the earth*] The outburst of spring flowers in Palestine is wonderful. Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 139, says: "The hills and valleys...glow with what is peculiar to Palestine, a profusion of wild flowers, daisies, the white flower called the Star of Bethlehem, but especially with a blaze of scarlet flowers of all kinds, chiefly anemones, wild tulips and poppies. Of all the ordinary aspects of the country, this blaze of scarlet colour is perhaps the most peculiar." Cp. also Dr Post, in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. II. p. 24.

the time of the singing of birds *is come*] The words *of birds*, as is indicated by the italics in the A.V., are not in the Hebrew. All it says is that *'ēth hazzāmīr* has come. Now *zāmīr* may mean either 'pruning' or 'singing,' and most of the ancient versions, e.g. LXX, Vulg., Targ., have translated it *pruning*, though the word does not occur elsewhere in

And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, 13

the O.T. with this meaning. But in favour of this translation we have the fact that the various agricultural operations of the year are in Heb. named by words of an exactly similar form, e.g. *qātsīr*, the harvest of grain, &c. Further, in Jer. li. 33, we have the entirely analogous expression *'ēth haqqātsīr* = 'the time of harvest.' It cannot, therefore, be doubted that the translation '*the time of pruning*' is thoroughly justified. Against it there is the fact that in *v.* 13 the vines are in bloom, and they cannot be pruned when they are at that stage. But there is what is called summer pruning, one purpose of which is to help in the formation of the fruit or blossom-buds of fruit trees. This is done while the shoots are yet young and succulent so that they may in most cases be nipped off with the thumb-nail. The time for this would be just before the blooming, and both pruning and blooming would be processes appropriate to spring. For the meaning *singing*, there is the fact that *zāmīr* occurs a number of times with the meaning *song* (e.g. Is. xxv. 5; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, &c.), but always of human singing. There is no instance of its being used of the singing of birds.

the voice of the turtle is heard in our land] The turtle-dove is named here, not as a singing bird, but as a bird of passage which "observes the time of its coming" (Jer. viii. 7); that is, it unfailingly appears in the spring, and by its voice announces its presence in the now leafy woods where it cannot readily be seen. Tristram says (*Nat. Hist.* p. 219), "Search the glades and valleys in March, and not a turtle-dove is to be seen. Return at the beginning of April, and clouds of doves are feeding on the clovers of the plain. They stock every tree and thicket. At every step they flutter up from the herbage in front, they perch on every tree and bush, they overspread the whole face of the land, and from every garden, grove, and wooded hill, pour forth their melancholy but soothing ditty unceasingly from early dawn to sunset."

13. *the fig tree putteth forth her green figs*] The word for 'green fig' is *paggāh*, which occurs in its Aramaic form in the name *Bethphage*. According to Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*, the fig bears two kinds of figs. (1) There is the early fig (Heb. *bikkūrāh*). These, when unripe, are called *paggīm*. They grow upon the old wood and appear before the leaf-buds, but require about four months, as a rule, to ripen. They are ripe towards the end of June. (2) The late figs (Heb. *tĕ'ēnīm*) which grow successively upon the new branches so long as the development of vegetation continues, and ripen at various times. In Palestine they ripen from August onwards. Often, especially in the older trees, there are many figs still unripe when the leaves fall and vegetation stops. These remain on the tree in their unripe state throughout the winter and become ripe only in spring, partly before, and partly after, the coming of the leaves. These, which are usually darker and partly violet coloured, are called winter figs. These latter are the only ones that can be referred to here, for they are a mark of the coming of spring. Probably they too were called *paggīm*.

putteth forth] With regard to the word thus translated there is much

And the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good* smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
14 O my dove, *that art* in the clefts of the rock, in the
secret places of the stairs,

difference of opinion. It is *chānṭṭāh*, and the verb occurs elsewhere in Scripture only in Gen. l. 2, 26, where it means 'to embalm.' The dictionaries give two meanings, (1) to spice, (2) to embalm. The latter is here out of the question, but the words may mean, *the fig tree spiceth her unripe figs*, that is, gives taste and perfume to them. On the other hand it may be rendered *reddeneth* as the Heb. word for 'wheat,' viz. *chiṭṭāh*, is in all probability derived from this root, and means the red or reddish-brown (cp. Levy's *Neuhebr. Wörterb.* II. 203 *a*). The corresponding Arabic word which means to redden, occurs of leather only, but all the data suggest that it was also used of the colour of plants approaching maturity. Here consequently it most probably means, **the fig tree maketh red ripe her winter figs**, which grow red or even violet as they ripen.

and the vines with *the tender grape give a* good *smell*] Rather, as R.V., **and the vines** (are) **in blossom, they give forth their fragrance.** *Blossom* is in Heb. *sĕmādhar*, a word which occurs only in the Song of Solomon. The Rabbis and the Mishnah say that the word signifies the tender grapes when they first appear. Twenty days later they become *bōsĕrīm* = ὄμφακες, and when they are fully ripe they are called *'anābhīm*. Similarly Kimchi. But in the Targum to Is. xviii. 5 *nitztzāh* = 'flower' is translated by *semādhar*, and in the Syriac version of Is. xvii. 11 the same word is used where we have, "thou makest thy seed to blossom," so that probably it is to be taken as 'bloom' or flower, more especially as the vines would hardly have rudimentary grapes so early as April, which is the time when the rain is over and gone. The derivation of the word is unknown.

my love] Here, as in *v.* 10 and elsewhere, *my friend*.

Arise, my love] should be *Rise up, my friend*.

14. *clefts of the rock*] Rather, *hiding places of the rock*. The word *chaghwē* occurs only here and in the quotation from an older prophet which is found in Jer. xlix. 16 and Obad. 3. There is no root known in Heb. from which the word can be derived, but its meaning is fixed by the Arab. *hagar*, 'a place of refuge' (cp. Oxf. Heb. Lex. *s. v.*), and this meaning is supported by the parallelism, for we have 'secret place' or 'covert' in the next clause.

in the secret places of the stairs] Better, as R.V., **in the covert of the steep place.** The word *madhrēghāh* occurs again Ezek. xxxviii. 20 in the phrase "the steep places shall fall." It probably has the same meaning here. *Stairs* rests entirely on the analogy of Arabic, and is here quite inappropriate. There is no necessary reference to the character of the place where the bride is. The wild dove chooses high and inaccessible rocks as its resting-place because of its shyness. The shyness and modesty of the bride is meant to be indicated. There may however be some reference to the fact that the lover cannot approach the place where she is.

Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;
For sweet *is* thy voice, and thy countenance *is* comely.
Take us the foxes, 15
The little foxes, that spoil the vines:
For our vines *have* tender grapes.
My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his: 16
He feedeth among the lilies.
Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, 17

let me see thy countenance] let me have sight of thee, *for* **thy form** *is comely.*

15. In answer to her lover's request that she should let him hear her voice the bride sings a fragment of a vineyard-watcher's song. Probably, as Oettli suggests, he had heard her sing it before, and would recognise her by it, for she had not as yet revealed herself to him. He had been watching for her at the windows, and peering in at the lattices, and now she assures him of her presence. The word *shū'āl* denotes an animal which digs into and dwells in the earth, for it means 'the burrower,' and is derived from the root which gives us also *shō'al*, the hollow of the hand. It is the common fox here probably, though jackals are also called by this name, e.g. Ps. lxiii. 10, where those slain by the sword are said to be a portion for *shū'ālīm*.

that spoil the vines] Rather, **the vineyards**. This includes the vines, for though foxes are carnivorous animals in the main, they also devour plants, so that besides digging their holes in the vineyards, and making tracks among the vines and gaps in the fences, they actually bite the young shoots of the vines and eat the grapes. (Cp. Theocritus, *Id.* v. 112, where vines are said to be spoiled by their deadly bite.) In vine-growing countries, as for instance in Australia, foxes when killed have been found with nothing in their stomachs but grapes. Perhaps there may be a side reference here to the Shulammite's danger in the royal hareem. She speaks of her person as her vineyard, and there may be here a call to her lover to deliver her from those who wish to profane it.

for our vines have *tender grapes*] **for our vineyards are in blossom.** Heb. *semādhār* (cp. *v.* 13). The use by the bride of this peculiar word which her lover has just used may be meant to inform him that she has heard all he has just said.

16. This verse is addressed by the bride to her companions within the house, or is spoken in a loving rapture to herself. Some however think that it is sung to the lover.

he feedeth among the lilies] Rather, as in R.V., **He feedeth** *his flock* **among the lilies.** It may also be rendered, *the shepherd among the lilies*, the shepherd standing in apposition to the 'him' involved in 'his.'

17. Alarmed for his safety, she now exhorts her lover to depart till the evening when he might return with greater safety.

Until the day break] R.V. **Until the day be cool,** lit. *until the day*

Turn, my beloved,
And be thou like a roe or a young hart
Upon the mountains of Bether.

blow, i.e. until the evening wind rises; cp. Gen. iii. 8, where 'at the wind of the day' is properly rendered by the A.V. "in the cool of the day," i.e. when the sun has lost its power. 'When the shadows flee away,' therefore, does not denote dispersion of the shades of night by the rising sun, but the disappearance of the shadows of rocks, trees, &c., when the sun sets.

be thou like, &c.] *make thyself like a gazelle or a young hart on the cleft-riven mountains*, i.e. flee swiftly away. The Heb. for the last clause is *al hārē bether*. There are three possible ways of explaining the word *bether*. (1) It may be a proper name, as the A.V. takes it to be, following some of the Greek versions (cp. Hastings' *Bible Dict.*). (2) It may mean a division or cleft. The analogy of the word *bithrōn*, 2 Sam. ii. 29, which appears to denote a mountain ravine, as the words there are, "they went through all the *bithron*" or ravine, would support this. It may be that 'the ravine' had become a proper name, just as 'the valley' has become in some places; but it probably was originally a mere descriptive name. This is the view of the LXX, and if that analogy holds *hārē bether* would mean *cleft-riven mountains*, as we have translated it. In the only other passages where *bether* occurs, Gen. xv. 10, Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19, it means the part of an animal cut in two at the making of a covenant. Reasoning from this, Ewald and others prefer to render *mountains of separation*, i.e. mountains that separate; but if the view of the situation which we have taken be correct, the Shulammite is not separated from her lover by mountains, for he is at her window. (3) Some authorities take *bether* to be a contraction of μαλάβαθρον, Lat. *malabathron*, and hold it to be some aromatic plant. But there is a difficulty in finding out what *malabathron* was. If, as some maintain, it is the equivalent of the Sanscrit *tamalapatra* and means the betel plant, then our phrase would mean 'hills planted with betel.' But the betel palm which bears the betel nut grows only in S. India, Ceylon, Siam, the Malay Archipelago, and the Philippine Islands, and nothing is known of either it or the betel vine (the plant in the leaves of which the betel nut is eaten) having been grown in Palestine. Moreover, the betel nut and leaf are not used for their perfume, as most who take *bether* as betel seem to suppose. They are not aromatic to any great extent, and they are cultivated and collected only for use as a masticatory (*Enc. Brit.* III. 616). There would appear, however, to have been another *malabathron* (cp. Field's *Hexapla*, II. 416, quotations, and Horace, *Carm.* II. 8 with Macleane's note), from which unguents were made. This was specially associated by the Romans with Syria, but it may have been so only because it was from traders of that country they obtained it. But if the plant grew in Syria, then *mountains of bether* would be parallel to *mountains of spices* (ch. viii. 4). Some would actually read here *hārē besāmīm*. Cheyne on the other hand would read *hārē bĕrōthīm*, i.e. 'mountains of cypresses.'

By night on my bed I sought *him* whom my soul loveth : 3
I sought him, but I found him not.
I will rise now, and go about the city 2

Chap. III. 1—5. A Dream.

Almost all commentators agree that we have here a dream narrated to some persons, in which the Shulammite seems to herself to have sought her lover in the city and failed to find him. Those who take the dramatic view think of it as narrated to the women of the court. Oettli's view is that the Shulammite expected her lover to return at sunset. He did not come, and so her agitated heart sought him in this dream, which she tells to her companions, adding the refrain already used in ii. 7, which deprecates the stirring up of love before it arises spontaneously. Ewald, who regards the end of ch. ii as dealing only with a waking dream, and not a real incident, thinks of this as a narrative of what she remembered to have dreamed during her sad night in the king's palace. Delitzsch again, who thinks of the lover as Solomon, considers the dream to be one that came to her night after night, when she had become doubtful of the king's love for her. Budde's view is one that entirely contradicts his theory that lovers could not meet and have such intercourse as is depicted in the book before marriage. He makes this a strong point in his criticism of the dramatic theory, yet here he says of this section, "The bride speaks. She narrates a dream she had as a girl, for what she narrates can be understood only as a dream. She had so loved her husband for a length of time that she dreamt she was married to him." Martineau, because of a misunderstanding of the passage and on other insufficient grounds, would strike out the verses altogether. In any case they describe a dream, and of all the suggestions as to the occasion Oettli's seems the best.

1. *By night*] Lit. **In the nights**. In Ps. xvi. 7 the same phrase is translated "in the night seasons," and some understand it here of the night hours. But in none of the few passages in which the plural *lēlōth* occurs, is it used in this sense. In all it refers to more nights than one, not to the several parts of one night. It would therefore seem that she means to say, that one night after another she dreamt that she missed and sought her lover. More than once that had come to her, so that more than one night must have passed before she told the dream.

on my bed] This means that the dream came to her when she was in her bed. The repetition of *I sought* expresses well the continued and repeated searching always ending in failure, which is so characteristic of dreams and so painful. The place where she first looked for him is left indeterminate as it often is in dreams.

2. R.V. rightly inserts *I said* at the beginning of the verse. It is a vivid presentment of what happened, when her hope of her lover's presence was disappointed. She said in her dream not *I will rise now*,

In the streets and in the broad ways,
I will seek *him* whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.
3 The watchmen that go about the city found me:
To whom I said, Saw ye *him* whom my soul loveth?
4 *It was* but a little that I passed from them,
But I found *him* whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and would not let him go,

but **Come let me arise and let me go about in the city.** The hortative forms of the verb beautifully express the energy, and perhaps the anxiety, with which she seemed in her dream to seek for him whom her soul loved.

the city] Not necessarily a 'city' in our sense of the word, but any place of any size which had defences, as distinct from the mere village. Cp. 2 Kings xvii. 9, "They built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city," where 'cities' must include the tower of the watchmen. Consequently, Jerusalem need not here be intended; more probably it is either Shulam or some place in the neighbourhood where her lover resided. Thither she had travelled in her dream.

in the streets and in the broad ways] Better, **in the streets and in the open spaces.** In ancient cities in Palestine the streets were exceedingly narrow, but just within the gates there were wider spaces, as also where the streets began, and where they crossed each other. These all would be called *rĕchōbōth*. As the mention of the watchmen indicates that even for the dreamer the search takes place at night, the streets and squares cannot be referred to as places of public resort. The refrain, *but I found him not*, expresses well that feeling of distress at the frustration of our efforts which is the chief pain of dreams.

3. *The watchmen*] For the practice of having watchmen in cities, cp. Ps. cxxvii. 1, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Grätz supposes that the mention of watchmen favours his very late date for the book. But probably this very obvious precaution was taken in Palestine from the earliest times, and in any case the passage quoted above shews that it was an established custom comparatively early. Cp. also Is. xxi. 11.

Saw ye, &c.] The A.V. rightly inserts *to whom I said*, but in the Heb. her dream-question is introduced with the same vivid abruptness as her previous utterance, *Come let me arise*, and without any interrogative particle. She also, as we all do in dreams, takes it for granted that all men know what the object of her preoccupation is. It would however be possible to translate *ye have seen* in the sense *ye must have seen*.

4. It was *but a little that I passed from them*] i.e. **Hardly had I gone from them** *when I found him whom my soul loveth.*

I held him] Rather, **I laid hold on him.**

and would not let him go] Better, either as Oettli, *I did not let him*

Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.
I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, 5
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please.

Who *is* this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars 6
of smoke,

go until, &c., or as Driver, *Tenses*, § 42 *β* and § 85 note, *I would not let him go until*, &c. In the former case the impf. form is held to be an impf. consec., though the consec. *waw* has been separated from its verb by the negation. Cp. Ps. viii. 6 and Job xxxiii. 4. Bringing him to her mother's house must signify that he was to be her acknowledged lover.

5. As in ch. ii. 7. Probably here as there the significance of the adjuration is, that after such a demonstration of her deep-seated love the daughters of Jerusalem should not seek to arouse in her love for another by mere extraneous solicitations.

Chap. III. 6—11. The King's Return.

King Solomon must be supposed to be coming from Jerusalem, to the royal residence in the North where the Shulammite is, or to be returning thither after an absence. Apparently he comes in special splendour, seeking to overawe her thereby. She notices the approaching train, and asks what it may be, *v.* 6. In the remaining verses a watchman or attendant tells her that it is the litter of Solomon surrounded by his guards, *vv.* 7 and 8. He then describes the litter, *vv.* 9 and 10, while in *v.* 11 he exhorts the court ladies to go forth to see the king in all his splendour, crowned as he was by his mother in the day of his espousals. In *v.* 6 the speaker might be a spectator or the watchman, but the fact that in every one of the lyrics hitherto the Shulammite has spoken leads us to suppose that she is the speaker here.

6. *Who* is *this that cometh out*] In the Heb. as it stands, *this* is feminine, and the participles *coming up* and *perfumed* are in agreement with it. Hence many hold that the verse is spoken of a woman, either of a princess whom Solomon, even in the midst of his wooing of the Shulammite, is about to marry, or of the Shulammite, who is seen approaching Jerusalem with Solomon as her husband in a bridal procession. But it need not necessarily be so. *This* may be taken as neuter, the fem. often representing the neuter, as there is no special neuter form in Heb. In that case the translation here would be literally 'Who is that which cometh up?' This is strictly parallel to Esau's question to Jacob, Gen. xxxiii. 8, "Who is all this camp?" i.e. 'Who are the human beings in it?' (Cp. Davidson, *Heb. Synt.* § 8, R. 1, and Ewald, *Heb. Synt.* E. T. p. 196.) This view is more in accord with the following words: for, obviously, the procession is too remote

Perfumed *with* myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant?
7 Behold his bed, which *is* Solomon's;
Threescore valiant *men are* about it,
Of the valiant of Israel.

to permit of the spectators who speak here knowing that any lady in it is perfumed with myrrh, &c. It must, therefore, be the thing seen, not any person, which is perfumed. The idea is that something surrounded with incense, naturally supposed to be perfumed, is approaching. "The pomp is like that of a procession before which the censer of frankincense is swung" (Del.). Verse 7 tells us that *this* is the *miṭṭāh* of Solomon.

out of the wilderness] i.e. from the pasture lands as distinct from the cultivated lands. This is quite unintelligible on Budde's hypothesis. Cp. Appendix ii, § 9.

like pillars of smoke] This expression strengthens the view taken of the last clause. *This* which is like pillars of smoke cannot be a person, but must be a litter or procession which is overhung by, or surrounded with, columns of smoke. The word for columns *timārōth* occurs again in the O.T. only in Joel ii. 30 (Heb., iii. 3). The LXX translate it by στελέχη, 'trunks' of smoke, evidently connecting the word with *tāmār*, 'a palm tree,' to which a rising column of smoke has a great resemblance. It spreads out only at the top of the column-like stem, like a palm tree above its trunk. More probably, however, it is derived from a verb *yāmar*='*āmar*, the original meaning of which was 'to rise high.'

perfumed] Lit. *incensed*, i.e. having incense burnt before it. The couch or litter, or the procession, is having perfume burnt before it, viz. myrrh and frankincense. For the former cp. ch. i. 13, and for the latter Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 355. Frankincense is the gum of a tree which grows in the hill country of India, the *Boswellia serrata* of botanists. Probably it came to Palestine through Arabia, cp. Is. lx. 6. The resin is obtained by simply slitting the bark.

with all powders of the merchant] i.e. with all the aromatic preparations which the wandering merchants brought from foreign lands.

7. *Behold his bed, which* is *Solomon's*] This is an answer to the question of the last verse, "Who or what is this which cometh up," &c. It should be, **Behold, it is Solomon's palanquin**, and it is spoken either by the same person who asks the question, or by another bystander. The word *miṭṭāh*, translated 'bed' by the A.V., has that meaning, but it is used also of couches at table, Esth. i. 6 (R.V.), of sofas, Am. iii. 12, and of biers, 2 Sam. iii. 31. Here it means *a litter* or *palanquin*. The A.V. rendering, *his bed, which is Solomon's*, is simply a literal translation of a pleonastic way of expressing the genitive which is constant in Aramaic, and which may have been common in the popular speech of Northern Israel.

threescore valiant men are *about it, of the valiant of Israel*] *Gibbōr*, the word translated *valiant man*, is the intensive of *geber*='a man,'

They all hold swords, *being* expert in war: 8
Every man *hath* his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.
King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of 9
Lebanon.
He made the pillars thereof *of* silver, 10
The bottom thereof *of* gold,
The covering of it *of* purple,

and denotes a strong, bold man, hence a hero in war. Solomon's litter is surrounded by his bodyguard.

8. *They all hold swords*] This is a circumstantial and descriptive clause, and their holding swords is not meant to be explained by *expert in war*, as the insertion of 'being' in the A.V. might suggest. Rather it should be rendered, **Threescore valiant men—all of them with swords in their hands, and trained to war, each with his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night**, i.e. to ward off danger that might arise in the night. The mention of 'night' here probably suggested the translation of *miṭṭāh* as 'bed.' The Heb. word translated '*hold*' in the A.V. has the form of a passive participle, but must be translated as active. Cp. Ges.-K. *Gramm.* § 50*f*.

9. In this verse we have a continuation of the spectator's or warder's call to those who are looking out at the royal cavalcade from the house or palace where the Shulammite is. The speaker must be conceived as uttering an aside to those about him, giving a description of the *miṭṭāh* from his previous knowledge. Here he calls it an *appiryōn*, which the LXX translate by *phŏrcion*, which means a litter in which one is borne. This is undoubtedly the correct meaning, but the derivation of the word is uncertain. It may be, as Cheyne says, *Encycl. Bibl.*, art. 'Canticles,' a mere corruption.

the wood of Lebanon] Lit. the *woods*, i.e. the cedar and the cypress.

10. *the pillars thereof*] The supports of the canopy or roof.

the bottom thereof] Rather, **the back**, that upon which one leans. Cp. LXX ἀνάκλιτον, Vulg. *reclinatorium*.

the covering of it] **the seat of it**.

purple] i.e. the seat of it is upholstered with purple, *argāmān*. This is the *red* purple, which is sometimes so dark as to be almost black. It is to be distinguished from the violet or cerulean purple which is *těkhēleth*. Both words are found in Assyrian inscriptions as *argamannu* and *takiltu*. Attempts to derive *argāmān* from a Heb. root are practically abandoned, and Benary's suggestion that it is the Sanscrit *râgaman* = 'red,' an adj. derived from *râga*, 'red colour,' with the formative syllable *mat* or *vat* (cp. Addit. Ges. *Thes.* p. 90), is probable; more especially as the Aramaic form of the word, *argĕwān*, can be explained by another adj. form of the same word, viz. *râgavan*, which is identical in meaning with *râgaman*.

The midst thereof being paved *with* love, for the daughters
of Jerusalem.

11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king
Solomon
With the crown where*with* his mother crowned him
In the day of his espousals,
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

the midst thereof being paved with *love, for the daughters of Jerusalem*] This is a very difficult phrase to understand, and it has been very variously interpreted. The A.V. can hardly be right in rendering 'love *for* the daughters of Jerusalem,' for the preposition is *min* which cannot mean *for*. The R.V. has, more correctly, **from** *the daughters of Jerusalem*.

paved with *love*] Lit. *paved as to love*, the word being an adv. accus. The translation is grammatically correct. (Cp. Davidson, *Synt.* § 78, R. 2.) But what does 'paved with love from the daughters of Jerusalem' mean? Gesenius in his *Thes.* translates, "paved in a lovely manner by the daughters of Jerusalem," but besides that the prep. *min* cannot be used for the *causa efficiens* with the passive, the word 'love' is not found elsewhere in such a sense. Del. translates, *made up as a bed, from love on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem*, and explains it to mean that they, from love to the king, have procured a costly tapestry which they have spread over the purple cushion. Oettli, following the LXX, takes *love* to mean, 'a mark of love,' and translates, "the middle of it adorned as a mosaic, a love-gift on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem." Budde would change the order of the words, and reading *hōbhānīm* = 'ebony' for *ahābhāh* = 'love,' would translate, "its seat is inlaid with ebony, its centre purple." If the text is corrupt this may perhaps have been its original form. But of the text as it stands Delitzsch's rendering seems to be the best, except that *wrought as a mosaic* would be better than *made up as a bed*.

11. *the day of his espousals*] Either this day, or another, so that the meaning may be either that he was to be married on this day, or that he had been married formerly, and now was wearing the crown his mother then gave him. The latter is the more probable. Budde maintains that this verse proves that Solomon here means only the bridegroom, since an actual king was not crowned on his wedding-day, nor by his mother. But he gives no evidence for his opinion, and at king Solomon's wedding the queen-mother may have played an important part. She may quite well have put a wedding crown on his head, for it is the custom at Jewish weddings now that the bridegroom should be crowned.

CHAP. IV. 1—7. THE ROYAL SUITOR.

King Solomon is here the speaker, and in these verses he presses his suit anew by praise of the Shulamnite's beauty. The whole song is

Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; 4
Thou *hast* doves' eyes within thy locks:
Thy hair *is* as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

evidently modelled, as several of the succeeding songs are, on the *wasf* or description of the bride, which is so prominent a thing at marriage festivals in Syria to this day. To have established this is Wetzstein's great merit, for until his *Essay on the Threshing-Board* appeared these descriptions were to a large extent inexplicable. But the discovery that the *wasf* is an ancient form of song connected by prescription with love and marriage explains its appearance here. In a series of love-songs disposed so as to give scenes of a connected narrative, it was natural and almost inevitable that the *wasf* should be imitated. It has been noticed by many that the spontaneity and originality of the other poems disappear in these descriptions. This is due to their being written according to a stereotyped form. That the *wasf* was imitated when no regular marriage *wasf* was intended, but only a love-song, is proved by the fact that in one of the *Mu'allaqāt*, the seven poems said to have been hung in the Caaba at Mekka in pre-Islamic times, that viz. of Amru ibn Kulthum, in verses 13—18 inclusive, there is a description of a woman much in the tone of this.

1. *my love*] **my friend.**

thou hast *doves' eyes*] **thine eyes are (as) doves.** Cp. i. 15.

within thy locks] **from behind thy veil.** The translation *locks* is that of the Jewish commentators, Kimchi and Rashi. The *burqu'* or face-veil of a lady is thus described in Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. I. p. 57. It is a long strip of white muslin, concealing the whole of the face except the eyes, and reaching nearly to the feet. It is suspended at the top by a narrow band, which passes up the forehead, and which is sewed, as are also the two upper corners of the veil, to a band which is tied round the head. Lane remarks that though worn for the purpose of disguising whatever is attractive in the wearer, it fails in accomplishing its main purpose, displaying the eyes, which are almost always beautiful, making them to appear still more so by concealing the other features which are seldom of equal beauty. But as it was not the custom that Hebrew women should be secluded, as is now the custom in Syria, the veil must have been used as part of full dress. This would account for its being worn in the house as it appears to be here.

thy hair is *as a flock of goats*] i.e. each braid in its glossy blackness is like a separate goat of the herd. The usual colour of goats was black.

that appear from mount Gilead] Literally, *that recline from mount Gilead.* The picture the words suggest is that of a herd of goats reclining on the slopes of mount Gilead, and raising their heads when disturbed. This gives a picture of rows of goats reclining on an undulating slope, and this latter is the point of comparison. For, if the Heb. *gāleshū* is connected with the Arabic *galasa*, as seems likely, it means

2 Thy teeth *are* like a flock of *sheep that are* even shorn,
which came up from the washing;
Whereof every one beareth twins, and none *is* barren
among them.

3 Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech
is comely:
Thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate within
thy locks.

'to sit up after lying down.' It may be doubted however whether so much can be legitimately put by pregnant construction into the *from*. Budde connects the word with the movement of the herds, and refers to the late Heb. *gālash*, which means 'to boil up,' and is used of water. Levy also, *sub voce*, translates this passage, "which go by in waves"; F. Delitzsch's "swarm forth from," quoted in the *Variorum Bible*, is practically the same. Budde says mount Gilead is the S. portion of the range called now the *Belqa*, which is mostly pasture land. It lies within view of Judah and Jerusalem.

2. The A.V. has supplied a great deal in the first clause, and has diverted the comparison thereby from the whiteness to the evenness of the teeth. The comparison is really this, *Thy teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing*, i.e. they are white as a flock of sheep in their most spotlessly white condition. The smoothness of the teeth may also be referred to in the simile.

whereof every one beareth twins, and none is *barren among them*] There is a play on words here such as Orientals love. 'All of whom' is *shekkullām*, and 'a barren,' or rather, 'a childless one,' is *shakkūlāh*. In the R.V. margin the clause is translated, *which are all of them in pairs*, and undoubtedly that is the idea meant to be conveyed. The teeth run accurately in pairs, the upper corresponding to the lower, and none of them is wanting. But the Hiph. participle *math'īmōth* can hardly mean anything, according to O.T. usage, but 'producing twins.' Cp. the word for 'producing a firstborn' in Jer. iv. 31. Consequently the leading commentators retain this meaning. It would also seem to be demanded by the use of the word *shakkūlāh*, 'bereaved,' for that too implies that the individual teeth are compared to mothers. The only thing in favour of the R.V. margin is that in the Talmud this same Hiph. is used in the meaning 'to be twins.' (Cp. Levy, *Neuhebr. Wörterb.* IV. 622.) As the language of the Song has in some respects affinities with late Heb., the word may have the same signification here. Certainly, if that view be not taken, the last clause of the verse can be only a rhetorical expansion of the simile, to indicate that the sheep to which the teeth are compared are in full health.

3. *like a thread of scarlet*] i.e. she has thin red lips. The word for 'red' here is *shānī* = 'cochineal.' In Arabic its name is *qirmiz*, hence our word 'crimson.'

thy speech] **thy mouth.** The word used here, *midhbār*, is an unusual one in this sense.

thy temples are *like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks*] Better,

Thy neck *is* like the tower of David 4
Builded for an armoury,
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty *men*.
Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes *that are* twins, 5

thy cheeks are like the rift of a pomegranate behind thy veil. Properly *raqqāth* means the thin part of the skull, from *rāqaq* = 'to be thin,' i.e. the temple; but, as in other languages, both cheeks and temple may be included in the one term. The meaning here is either that the temples strictly so called gleam through the slit of the veil, as the mingled white and red of the inside of a pomegranate gleam through the cracks of the rind, or if *pelach* means 'a piece,' the comparison is of the cheeks to the rounded form and ruddy colour of a section of this fruit.

4. *for an armoury*] *lēthalpiyyōth.* This rendering of a very difficult word follows the Talmud, which takes it to be a compound of *tal*, a form of the const. of *tel*, and *piyyōth* = 'edges,' i.e. swords. That gives 'a mound in which swords were stored,' 'an armoury.' But to compare a beautiful neck to a mound is impossible, and to call swords simply *edges* in a common name like this, would be very strange. Ewald renders 'built for war hosts,' connecting *talpiyyōth* with a similar Arabic word having that meaning. Delitzsch on the other hand translates, 'built in or according to terraces.' Perhaps the best rendering is Rothstein's, *built for trophies.* He takes the root to be *lāphāh*, which in late Heb. in Aphel means to set in rows. *Talpiyyōth* would then be 'repetitions of the act of setting in rows,' and then 'the things so set.' The bride's neck would, in that case, be compared to a tower adorned with trophies. Margoliouth in the *Expositor*, Jan. 1900, p. 45, takes the word to be a proper name. He points out that the LXX take it for the name of a place, and that the Arabic geographer Yakut says, *Talfiatha* is one of the villages of the *ghutah* or plain of Damascus. He would therefore translate, 'the tower of David built towards Talpioth,' and compares vii. 4, "the tower of Lebanon which looks towards Damascus." But can *built to* mean built so as to face?

whereon there hang a thousand bucklers] Heb. **the** *thousand bucklers*, denoting that those referred to were known as belonging to the tower of David. For shields hung as adornments, cp. Ezek. xxvii. 11, where of the gallant ship which is Tyre, it is said, "they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about, they have perfected thy beauty." Cp. Davidson, *in loc.*, and 1 Macc. iv. 57.

shields of mighty men] The Heb. here is *shiltē hag-gibbōrīm. Shelet* is generally translated *shield*, but Dr Barnes in the *Expository Times*, Oct. 1898, p. 48, deals very exhaustively with the word, and comes to the conclusion that it means armour, or equipment. In that case the translation would be, 'all the equipments of the heroes.' But shields hung round a tower might be used as a comparison for a beautiful neck adorned with jewels; suits of armour would not be so appropriate.

5. *two young roes*, &c.] **two fawns that are twins of a gazelle.**

Which feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the
hill of frankincense.

7 Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse, with me from
Lebanon:

which feed among the lilies] **pasturing** *among the lilies.* Probably the comparison is meant to be limited merely to the twin fawns, and the feeding among the lilies is simply a familiar and somewhat conventional background (cp. ii. 16 and vi. 2, 3), intended to complete the picture of the fawns in their native haunts.

6. *Until the day break*] As in iii. 7 we must translate, **Until the day cool and the shadows have fled**, i.e. until the evening. This verse, by its transition to action on the part of one of the chief speakers, a thing that does not occur in the bridal *wasf*, shews that we have not here a regular *wasf*. Budde and Bickell would consequently omit it.

to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense] This is taken by Oettli to mean, 'I will get me into a garden of spices in hilly ground.' He supposes that Solomon, thinking he has triumphed, says he will go away to a garden where he has planted exotic plants, and will return in the evening. This seems much preferable to the interpretations which find in these words allegorical references to the person of the bride. Cheyne would read *Hermon* for 'myrrh' (Heb. *mor*) and *Lebanon* for 'frankincense' (Heb. *lebhōnāh*). But no one could say that he was going on one afternoon to both Lebanon and Hermon, which is the highest peak of Anti-Libanus. The emendation would be feasible only if the whole complex of mountains were included in the name Lebanon.

Chap. IV. 8—Chap. V. 1. A true Lover's Pleading.

With *v.* 8 a new song, representing another scene, begins. In it the peasant lover of the Shulammite comes to beseech her to flee from the mountain region where she is detained, the home of wild beasts and the scene of other dangers. In *vv.* 9—15 he breaks forth into a passionate lyric, expressive of his love for her, and in *v.* 16 she replies, yielding to his love and his entreaties. Ch. v. 1 contains his reply.

8. The order of the words in the Heb. is specially emphatic, *With me from Lebanon, O bride, with me from Lebanon do thou come.* Evidently a contrast between the speaker and some other is here intended. Come with *me*, do not remain with *him*. This strongly supports the view that Solomon is endeavouring to win the maiden's love which has been given to another. Budde, finding the verse quite unintelligible on his hypothesis, excises it, but violence of that kind is not necessary. The Shulammite is at this point in some royal residence in the Lebanon, and her lover calls upon her to leave Solomon and come with him

Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.
Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, *my* spouse;

to her home. The reference to lions and leopards may be intended to indicate also her hostile surroundings in other respects. Cp. the Mo'allaqa of Antar, v. 6, where the loved one among a hostile tribe is said to be "dwelling among the roaring ones," i.e. the lions. Lions formerly inhabited Bashan at least, cp. Deut. xxxiii. 22. Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 116, says they lingered in Palestine till the time of the Crusades, and they are mentioned as living about Samaria by historians of the 12th century. Leopards are and always have been common in Palestine. They are a pest to herdsmen in Gilead even now. (Tristram, p. 113.)

look from the top of Amana] The verb *shūr* has generally in Heb. the meaning 'to look round'; but in common with other verbs of looking in a direction, it also means 'to go in a direction' (Is. lvii. 9). Occurring as it does in this passage in parallelism with 'come,' it most probably has the latter meaning. Cp. R.V. marg. We should therefore translate **depart** *from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens*, &c. In this way too the lions' dens and the mountains of the leopards gain a significance which they have not if the word be translated *look*. He warns her to flee from Lebanon as being full of dangers. *Ămānā* is generally held to be the district in which the river *Ămānāh* (2 Kings v. 12, *Qĕrē* for the *Kĕthībh*, *Ăbānāh*) rises. This is either the *Barada* which flows from Anti-Libanus, or the other river of Damascus, which flows from the slopes of Hermon. Others, as Budde, think of the Amanus of the ancients, i.e. the spur of the Taurus lying to the north of the Orontes. The former is much the more probable.

Shenir] or *Senir*. Hermon is the highest peak of the Anti-Lebanon range. It is called *Sion* in Deut. iv. 48. By the Amorites it was called *Sĕnīr*, and by the Sidonians *Siryōn* (Deut. iii. 9). It has three peaks, and the names Hermon and Sĕnīr, distinguished in 1 Chron. v. 23, Song iv. 8, may refer to two of the peaks. Cp. *the Hermons* of Ps. xlii. 6 (*Oxf. Lex.* p. 356).

9. *Thou hast ravished my heart*] This clause is represented by one word in Heb., a denom. Piel verb, formed from the noun *lēbhābh* = 'heart.' According to usage this might mean either 'thou hast heartened me,' i.e. as R.V. marg., *given me courage*, or 'thou hast disheartened me,' or stolen my heart away. The latter is the view of the A.V. and the preferable view. The translation, *ravish*, with its primary meaning 'to carry off by violence,' and its secondary one 'to enchant' or 'charm,' exactly corresponds to the Heb.

my sister, my spouse] R.V. **my bride**. The double name, as Budde remarks, can hardly have any other signification than an increase of

Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,
With one chain of thy neck.
10 How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* spouse!
How much better is thy love than wine!
And the smell of thine ointments than all spices!
11 Thy lips, O *my* spouse, drop *as* the honeycomb:
Honey and milk *are* under thy tongue;
And the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon.
12 A garden inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse;

tenderness, cp. viii. 1, "O that thou wert my brother." *My sister bride* occurs only in this chap. and in ch. v. 1, but, as Budde observes, in the ancient Egyptian love-songs, edited by Maspéro and Spiegelberg, 'my sister' and 'my brother' are the standing names for the lovers.

with one of thine eyes] From the use of the prep. *min* = 'from,' with *eyes* here, and from the fact that in the text *achath*, the masculine form of the numeral, stands, it is probable that some word such as 'glance' should be understood. Then we should translate, *with one* glance *of thine eyes*.

with one chain of thy neck] *Chain* here means a part of the necklace, but whether it means a single chain of the necklace, or a pearl or pendant is uncertain. Usage, in the only passages where the word occurs again, Judg. viii. 26, and Prov. i. 9, certainly is in favour of *chain*.

10. *How fair is thy love*] **How sweet are thy caresses.** In the next clause also, *love* should be *caresses*.

spices] Better, *perfumes*.

11. *drop* as *the honeycomb*] Rather, **drop virgin honey.** *Nōpheth* is honey that drops from the comb of itself. Budde understands this verse of the sweetness of kisses. Oettli and others think the 'virgin honey' means loving words. Analogy, both in the Scriptures and in profane poetry, is in favour of the second view. In Prov. v. 3 we have the very same phrase as here. "The lips of the strange woman drop honey." That kisses are not meant there, is clear from the second clause, "and her palate is smoother than oil." Cp. Theocritus, *Idyll* xx. 26, quoted by Ginsburg:

"More sweet my lips than milk in luscious rills,
Lips whence the honey, as I speak, distils."

Cp. also Prov. xvi. 24, "Pleasant words are as a honeycomb."

the smell of Lebanon] Owing to the aromatic shrubs of a peculiarly penetrating and pleasant odour which grow everywhere in Lebanon, anyone who has once lived there would recognise where he was, even if he had been suddenly transported thither again blindfold. This odour, and not the perfume of the cedars, is probably the 'smell of Lebanon' here referred to.

12—15. These verses are a further comparison of the bride in her beauty to a garden in its splendour of colour and its fertility, but a

A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant 13
fruits;
Camphire, with spikenard,
Spikenard and saffron; 14
Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;

garden shut or closed to all but its lawful owner. The reference is to her modesty and chastity. *Nā'ūl* is properly *shut and bolted.*

12. *a spring shut up*] The word rendered *spring* is *gal*, not found elsewhere in this sense. Another derivative from the same root is used in Josh. xv. 19 and Judg. i. 15 in a similar sense. Some MSS., the LXX, the Vulg. and Syr. have *gan* = 'a garden,' repeated, and Budde with others prefers this reading. But it is difficult to see why the perfectly simple and satisfactory *gan* should have been changed into the more difficult *gal*. The only argument for *gan* which seems to have much weight is that the 'spring' is mentioned again immediately under another name. But that is met by Delitzsch, who distinguishes the 'spring' from the 'fountain'; the latter being the place whence the former issues forth.

a fountain sealed] Cp. Prov. v. 15—18. The fountain is the condition precedent of the garden, so that the metaphor is not changed. Perhaps the three nouns of the verse should be distinguished thus: **A garden** *shut in is my sister my bride, a* **streamlet** *shut in, a sealed* **spring**. Del. points out that *chōthām*, 'a seal,' is used directly of maiden-like behaviour.

13. *Thy plants* are *an orchard*] Better, *Thy shoots make an orchard.* These shoots denote all the bride's charms. *Orchard* is in Heb. *pardēs*, which is merely a grander word for *gan*, and is originally Persian = 'a paradise.' It is found elsewhere in the O.T. only in Neh. ii. 8 and Eccl. ii. 5. It is usually and rightly regarded as a proof of the late origin of this book. Cp. Introduction, § 4.

pleasant fruits] Lit. *fruits of excellence*, R.V. **precious fruits.**

camphire] Properly, **henna**. See note on ch. i. 14.

spikenard] Cp. ch. i. 12. Grätz for *nerādhīm* reads *werādhīm* = roses. Rather than that Budde would strike out the last three words as a repetition. But either suggestion would detract from the poetical character of the passage.

14. *saffron*] Heb. *karkōm* occurs in the O.T. only here, but its meaning is clear from the Arabic *kurkum* = the *Crocus sativus*. There are many species of crocus in Palestine, and from most of them saffron is obtained. The women and children gather the pistil and stigma from the centre of each flower. These are dried in the sun and then pounded. It is used for a condiment. The name 'saffron' is merely the Arabic *zafran* = 'yellow.' The best saffron is of an orange-red colour. See Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 480.

calamus] Heb. *qāneh*, i.e. 'aromatic reed.' According to Tristram, p. 438, who makes a careful collation of all the passages in which the word occurs, this is not a sweet cane like the sugar-cane, but an aromatic

Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:
15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.

cane imported from the East, either from Arabia Felix, or more probably from India. It is the same as the *qeneh bōsem*, the 'sweet calamus' of Ex. xxx. 23.

cinnamon] Heb. *qinnāmōn*, our cinnamon, a plant unknown in Syria. It is a native of Ceylon, and belongs to the family of the laurels. The tree attains to the height of 30 feet and has a white blossom. The spice is simply the inner rind separated from the outer bark and dried in the sun. See Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 346.

trees of frankincense] For frankincense see ch. iii. 6.

aloes] A stately tree (Num. xxiv. 6) from which some aromatic substance was derived. It has generally been identified, according to Tristram (p. 333), with the *Aquilaria agallocha*, the eagle wood, found in Cochin China and Silhet in Northern India. This tree attains a height of 120 feet, and from it a costly perfume is extracted, which yields a fragrant odour when burned. The *Enc. Brit.*, *sub voce*, supposes that it more probably is the *Aquilaria malaccensis*, found in the Malayan Peninsula, from which it would more easily find its way into Palestine in Biblical times than the other from North India. Cp. article 'Aloes,' *Encycl. Bibl.* vol. I. p. 121.

the chief spices] i.e. the chief spice-bearing trees. It is notable that all the trees of this 'paradise' are rare exotics, probably to hint that the bride's charms are as rare and as much to be admired as such plants are. But the rare and foreign character of all the objects to which the bride is compared is entirely incompatible with the supposition that our book is a collection of popular songs (*Volkslieder*). In them the comparisons are always with homely well-known objects.

15. *a fountain of gardens*, &c.] Some take these words as vocatives, but more probably *thou art* is to be understood as in R.V. Budde would read 'my garden' (*gannī*) for 'gardens' (*gannīm*), and would translate, "The fountain of my garden is a well of living waters." This is supported by the reading of the LXX, for they, from their having πηγὴ κήπου καὶ would seem to have read not *gannīm* but *gannō*, i.e. 'his garden,' the Heb. letter *waw* being the sign for both *his* and *and*. But that would give no meaning here. The probability therefore is that the reading the Greek translators really had before them was *gannī*, *i* and *o* being hardly distinguishable in the writing then in use. Moreover, it would give a better arrangement of the text. In *v.* 12 the bride is compared to a garden and a spring. Verses 13 and 14 expand and particularise the garden simile. By Budde's reading *v.* 15 becomes a similar expansion of the spring simile. We should then read, *thou art* **the fountain of my garden**, *a well of living*, i.e. *flowing*, *waters*, *and* **rushing Lebanon streams**. She is the source of all the joy and refreshment of his existence, just as a fountain is the cause of all the coolness and shade of the garden which it waters.

16. It is doubtful whether this whole verse is spoken by the Shulam-

Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; 16
Blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his pleasant fruits.

I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: 5
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;

mite, or the latter clause only, her lover being still the speaker in the first half of the verse. That he is still the speaker in the first clause is suggested by '*my* garden' in *v.* 16 *b* and '*his* garden' in *v.* 16*c*. But the change of pronoun is quite compatible with the view that the bride is the speaker throughout. *My garden* would then be 'myself,' 'my person,' as in ch. i. 6, 'my vineyard.' *His garden* again, in the mouth of the Shulammite indicates, as Oettli well remarks, "a certain shamefast modesty." Probably the view that the bride speaks the whole verse is preferable.

Awake, O north wind] The north wind is cool in Palestine, and the south or south-west wind is warm. They are here called upon to bring forth, by their alternation, the **perfumes** (not *the spices*) of the garden, that they may flow out, i.e. she desires that the graces of her person and her mind may come to their highest perfection. This would be more appropriate in the mouth of the bride, who like all true lovers would desire to be nobler and more beautiful than she is, that her lover might find her worthy, than in the mouth of her lover, who would naturally think of her as being altogether fair.

Let my beloved come into his garden, &c.] This last clause of the verse is spoken, it should be remembered, by a loving woman shut up in a royal dwelling away from her lover, and expresses her longing for the time when she shall be wholly his.

pleasant fruits] R.V. **precious fruits**, as in *v.* 13.

Ch. v. **1.** The great question regarding this verse is how the perfect tenses in it are to be understood. Some maintain that they must be rigorously taken as perfects; others think that they should be understood in one or other of the modified perfect senses which this tense may have in Heb. Grammatically we may render either, *I have come*, or *I come* (cp. Ges. *Gr.* § 106 *i*); or lastly *I will come*, perf. of confidence (Ges. § 106 *n*). Those who, like Delitzsch, suppose that the marriage has taken place, take the first; Budde, who regards the song as one sung after the marriage has been celebrated, but during the week of festivities, takes the second; those who regard the marriage as still in the future cannot but take the perfs. in the third sense. In that case the words indicate that after what the bride has revealed of her love, the bridegroom feels that the marriage is as good as accomplished.

I have gathered my myrrh with my spice] Rather, **I have plucked my myrrh with my balsam.**

I have drunk my wine with my milk:
Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved] The chief difficulty here is whether *dōdhīm*, the word translated 'friends,' should not be rendered 'caresses,' as it has meant hitherto throughout the book, or whether it is to be taken in the sense of 'beloved friends,' as its parallelism to *rē'īm* would suggest. That *dōdhīm* may have this latter meaning seems clear, for in many languages the abstract word, 'love,' is used in a concrete signification. On the whole this rendering *beloved friends* seems the best here. Siegfried seeks to establish a distinction between *dōdhīm* written defectively (דדים), and the same word written fully (דודים), the former being used, he says, only of caresses, the latter of friends, quoting König, *Lehrgeb.* vol. II. 2, 262 *b*. He translates, "Eat ye too, O companions, and intoxicate yourselves, O friends," and says that the clause would mean in prose, 'do ye marry also.' But in that case some way of emphasising the *ye* would have been expected. It seems preferable to understand the words of an invitation to his friends to come to the marriage feast he has spoken of as being as good as made (Ewald).

drink abundantly] That the bridegroom should invite them to drink to satiety is in accord with what would appear to have been the custom, viz. to shew sympathy at such a feast by departing from the habitual abstemiousness of the East in regard to wine. Cp. John ii. 10, the marriage at Cana of Galilee. That *shākhar* may mean merely to drink to satiety, not to drunkenness, is proved by Hag. i. 6, "Ye eat, but ye have not enough, ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink"; where *lĕsōbhāh* is parallel to *lĕshokhrāh*. Some prefer to take the last clause as an address by the daughters of Jerusalem (Ginsburg), or by the poet to the young pair (Hitzig).

Chap. V. 2—VI. 3. A Dream.

On the hypothesis we have adopted, a night must be supposed to intervene between *vv.* 1 and 2. After the interview with the king and that with her lover night came; and as she slept she dreamed one of those troubled dreams consisting of a series of efforts frustrated, which so often follow on an agitated day. On the following morning she narrates the dream to the ladies of the court. Verses 2—7 relate the dream. In *v.* 8 the Shulammite, having just awaked and being still under the influence of her dream, asks the ladies, if they should find her lost lover, to tell him she is sick from love. In *v.* 9 they reply, asking with surprise what there is in her lover that moves her in such a fashion. In *vv.* 10—16 she gives a description of her lover as he dwells in her brooding imagination, and concludes in triumph, "*This* is my beloved and *this* is my friend." In ch. vi. 1, the court ladies ask eagerly whither this model of manly beauty is gone, and to this, in *vv.* 2 and 3, the Shulammite replies vaguely and evasively, and claims her lover for

I sleep, but my heart waketh: 2
It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh *saying*,
Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:
For my head is filled *with* dew,
And my locks *with* the drops of the night.
I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? 3

herself alone. Now all this is quite in place if a love-tale is being presented in a series of songs, but in a collection of verses to be sung at weddings in general it is impossible that the bride could be made to speak thus. Such references to pre-nuptial love would be not only unbecoming, but impossible. But in still another way this song is fatal to Budde's popular-song theory. In such a collection of wedding songs there is, of course, no connexion between the various lyrics. Each of them stands by itself, and there is no possibility of action of a dramatic kind on the part of the bride and bridegroom such as we undeniably have here. But Budde meets that by pointing out that Wetzstein reports a case in which a poet of the region where he discovered the *wasf* wrote a poem for a particular wedding. In that, before a description of the bride's ornaments and person, an account is given of the agricultural processes by which the wealth expended on her *trousseau* had been obtained. But, besides the fact that in the case cited as parallel to this, the poem was not a popular song, but a poem prepared for the special occasion, the addition to the *wasf* there is a very legitimate extension of the description, and has none of the dramatic element in it. The dramatic element here is very pronounced, and is evidently intended to give unity and movement to the whole poem.

2. *I sleep, but my heart waketh*] This clause states the circumstances under which the succeeding action takes place. As the dream is narrated at a later time, the participles should be rendered by the past tense, **I was sleeping**, *but my heart* **was awake.**

it is *the voice of*, &c.] Rather, **Hark! my love is knocking.**

my sister] Oettli says Solomon never calls the Shulammite by this intimate name. Budde thinks it significant that he does not here call her *kallāh* = 'bride.' Evidently he thinks that a post-nuptial word, but it is not necessarily so.

my undefiled] Rather, 'my perfect' or 'immaculate one.'

filled with *dew*] The dew in Palestine is often very heavy. Cp. Judg. vi. 38. From the fact that he about whom she dreamed is imagined to be in such a case, it is probable that the shepherd lover rather than Solomon is the object of her thoughts, and that she dreams of him as coming to her mother's house.

3. As all commentators remark, the reasons for not opening the door are of a very trifling kind, and such as are insurmountable only in dreams.

my coat] or *tunic*, a garment, generally of linen, worn next the skin

I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*,
And my bowels were moved for him.
5 I rose up to open to my beloved;
And my hands dropped *with* myrrh,
And my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh,
Upon the handles of the lock.

by both men and women. The man's tunic reached to the knee, the woman's was longer.

how] Heb. *'ēkhākhāh*, found elsewhere in the O.T. only in Esth. viii. 6. The use of this form has consequently some bearing on the date of the book. Budde remarks in this connexion that all the words occurring in this passage which are not used elsewhere occur in Judaeo-Aramaic.

I have washed my feet] Budde sees in this phrase an indication that the Shulammite was accustomed to go barefoot; but all wearers of sandals would have to wash their feet as much as those who might go barefoot.

defile them] **soil them**, Heb. *'ăṭannĕphēm*, found here only in O.T., but occurring in the Heb. of the Mishnah and in the Talmud. The suffix for *them* here is masculine, though the word for *feet* is feminine. This is one of the grammatical inaccuracies which are frequent in this book, but this particular irregularity is not uncommon elsewhere.

4. *by the hole* of the door] Lit. **from** *the hole*, i.e. the hole usually to be found in doors. This was not an opening through which the hand was inserted to unbolt the door, but one through which women could look out upon and speak with men, without being unduly exposed to observation themselves. Through this the Shulammite's lover puts his hand, either to beckon to her, or as an expression of his longing to be near her.

my bowels were moved for him] R.V. **my heart was moved for him.** The heart (*lēbh*) was for the Hebrew the seat of the intellect. The viscera or internal organs (*mē'īm*) were regarded as the seat of the affections, and were named where we should say 'the heart.' Cp. Ps. xl. 8, "Thy law is within my *mē'īm*," i.e. within my heart. Budde proposes to add the third clause of *v.* 6 to this verse, because he thinks it out of place there. He would read

"My love sent forth his hand, And his right hand from the hole.
And my heart was moved for him, My soul went forth when he spake."

5. *and my hands dropped*, &c.] Rather, *while my hands dropped myrrh.*

sweet smelling myrrh] Heb. *mōr 'ōbhēr*, lit. *flowing myrrh*, is that which flows out from the bark of the myrrh shrub of itself, and is specially valued, cp. *v.* 13. It is called also *mōr dĕrōr*, 'freely flowing myrrh' (Ex. xxx. 23).

the handles of the lock] R.V. **the handles of the bolt.** Some com-

I opened to my beloved;
But my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone:
My soul failed when he spake:
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
The watchmen that went about the city found me,
They smote me, they wounded me;

mentators, e.g. Delitzsch, suppose that the person who knocks has put the myrrh upon the bolt as an offering to the Shulammite, but the phrase, "my hands dropped myrrh upon," &c., implies that the myrrh was not on the bolt before she tried to open the door. Of course in real life she would not drop myrrh upon the bolts, but in a dream she might imagine it, especially when she was in unusual circumstances and surrounded by unwonted luxury. Probably she had been anointing herself with perfumes before she went to sleep. Budde thinks that the text is in disorder here and would read,

"I arose to open to my beloved,
[And laid hold upon] the handles of the bolt,
While my hands dropped myrrh,
And my fingers flowing myrrh."

Siegfried would strike out, "upon the handles of the bolt," as a gloss, and would leave the rest as it stands. Neither change seems necessary.

6. *had withdrawn himself*] Lit. *had turned away*. This disappointment is just such as comes in dreams.

my soul failed when he spake] R.V. **My soul had failed me when he spake**. This is the explanation of his departure. She had fainted when she heard his voice, and when she came to herself and opened the door he was gone. This seems to be the simple explanation of a clause which has greatly vexed interpreters. Hitzig, Ewald, and Oettli would read for *bĕdhabbĕrō* = 'when he spake,' *bĕdhobhrō*, in the sense 'when he turned away.' But this is an Aramaic meaning, and though, according to the *Oxford Heb. Lex.* this is probably the root meaning of the word from which all the others are derived, the verb is not found in Heb. in this sense. As the ordinary signification of the verb gives a good meaning here it seems unnecessary to go beyond it.

7. In this dream all goes ill with her, in comparison with the former dream (iii. 1 ff.). Oettli suggests that this is due to the anxious state of mind in which she lay down to sleep, shrinking from the return of her undesired lover (iv. 6).

that went about the city] R.V. rightly, **that go about the city**; the participle here indicating their duty, what they were accustomed to do.

they smote me, they wounded me] Taking her for a suspicious character, they tried to stop her, but in her wild anxiety she refused, until they used violence.

The keepers of the walls took away my vail from me.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my beloved, that ye tell him,
That I *am* sick of love.

9 What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women?
What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

the keepers of the walls] Better, **the watchmen of the walls**, the same probably as "the watchmen that go about the city." They may however be different divisions of the watchmen of the city. Del. thinks that the fact that she sought her beloved, not in the open field, nor in the villages, but in the city, is fatal to the 'shepherd' hypothesis here as in the other dream, but see note there.

my vail] The word here is different from that for 'veil' in ch. iv. 1 and 3. There it is *tsammāh*; here it is *rĕdhīdh*, a word which occurs again in the O.T. only in Is. iii. 23, where the A.V. translates 'veils,' as here. But the LXX has in both places *θέριστρον*, a thin summer garment, and here it should be translated **mantle**, or *thin outer garment*. Riehm, *Handwörterbuch*, p. 1428, says, "The veil mentioned in Song v. 7 and in Is. iii. 23 seems to have been a fine lawn garment which the women of the East still throw over their whole dress. Cp. Susanna *v.* 32." Cheyne and Driver translate it *mantle*. The word occurs in Syriac and in Targum for the Heb. *tsā'īph*='a veil,' and in the Mishnah.

8. *I charge you*] Better, *I adjure you, if ye find my beloved, what shall ye say unto him? That I am sick of love.* The connexion here is difficult. The Shulammite's loss was only in a dream, and how can the author represent her as carrying over her dream loss into real life? The answer made by some is, that this verse and the next contain matter which was inserted only to introduce the description of the Shulammite's beloved. But even if that were the case we should still look for some rational and intelligible transition. That can be got only if we conceive of the dream being related by the Shulammite while she is still not quite awake. She is represented as not distinguishing between her dreams and reality.

9. *What* is *thy beloved more than* another *beloved*] This is the reply of the daughters of Jerusalem. The A.V. gives the meaning correctly enough, but there is considerable perplexity as to the exact translation of the Heb. As the italics in the A.V. shew, there is no Heb. word corresponding to *another*, and the question is whether the preposition *min* in the phrase *middōdh* is to be translated comparatively, as the A.V. takes it, or partitively, 'what of a love is thy love?' i.e. **what kind of a love is thy love?** as Ewald, *Synt.* § 328 *a*, and Davidson, *Synt.* § 8, R. 2, translate it. Probably the latter is the better view, but in either case the meaning is the same, 'What is there so exceptional or extraordinary in this beloved, that thou adjurest us so?'

My beloved *is* white and ruddy, 10
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head *is as* the most fine gold, 11
His locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven.
His eyes *are* as *the eyes of* doves by the rivers of waters, 12
Washed with milk, *and* fitly set.

10. *white*] The Heb. *tsach* is an adj. derived from *tsāchach*, 'to shine' or 'glow,' 'to be brightly white.' Here, and in Lam. iv. 7, where the word is used of the colour of the skin, it means a clear, white complexion. In the latter passage the phrase is, 'more *tsach* than milk' contrasted with 'darker than blackness.'

the chiefest] Probably, as R.V. marg., *marked out by a banner*, or *raised like a banner*, 'eminent,' 'distinguished.' Some critics, however, connect the word with an Assyrian root meaning 'to look,' and explain 'looked at,' 'admired,' 'conspicuous.'

11. *bushy*] Heb. *taltallīm* occurs in the O.T. only here, and is a derivative from *tālal* or *tal*='to hang loosely down,' and then 'to throw down,' but its exact meaning is uncertain. The A.V. margin gives the translation 'curled' or 'curling,' but it probably represents the view that the word means 'hills' or 'undulations,' as some Rabbinical writers understand it. (Cp. Midrash Rabba on Levit. § 19, and Talmud, Tract. *Nedarim*, fol. 9 *b*.) In that case the meaning would be, that his locks were *undulating*. The LXX however translate ἑλάται= 'palm buds,' or the sheaths of the palm bud, which Schleusner says denotes "curls like those which the spathes of the palm form when they burst to let the fruit appear," when they hang down in ringlets. Others get the same meaning by taking *taltallīm* for the pendant parts of the vine, the tendrils.

12. *His eyes*, &c.] R.V. **His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks.** Here the idea is different from that in i. 15 and iv. 1. It is not the innocent dove-like look of the eye that is referred to. The eyes themselves, or at least the pupils of the eyes, are compared to doves. Ginsburg's quotation from the *Gitagovinda* is almost an exact parallel: "The glances of her eyes played like a pair of water birds of azure plumage, that sport near a full blown lotus in a pool in the season of dew."

washed with milk] Rather, *bathing in milk*. This may refer to the eyes; the pupils move in the white of the eye as if bathing in milk. Or it may refer to the doves, in which case it would be an extension or correction of the previous part of the simile; 'the eyes are like doves by brooks of water or rather streams of milk.' The choice between these alternatives depends upon the reference of the next clause *fitly set*. If it refers to the eyes, then this would best be understood of the eyes also. But if that be understood of the doves, as probably it should be, then to avoid the awkwardness of connecting the two participles with different subjects, this clause should be understood of the doves also.

fitly set] The A.V. in margin gives this note, "Heb. sitting in

13 His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, *as* sweet flowers:
His lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.
14 His hands *are as* gold rings set with the beryl:
His belly *is as* bright ivory overlaid *with* sapphires.
15 His legs *are as* pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold:

fulness, that is, fitly placed, and set as a precious stone in the foil of a ring." This is the traditional Jewish interpretation. Others explain *full* as opposed to sunken (Oettli). Possibly, as LXX suggest, the text is faulty and we should read *yôshĕbhôth 'al mĕlo' hammayīm*, and translate, *sitting upon full streams*, when the subject would, of course, be the doves. This latter reading and the rendering it suggests are simpler and more natural than any of the other varied conjectures that have been made.

13. *as a bed of spices*] Rather, *as a bed of* **balsam shrubs**. Probably we should read the plur. *beds* as in vi. 2, to correspond with the plur. *cheeks*. The Heb. for 'bed' is *'arūghāh* derived from *'āragh*, 'to mount up,' and signifying a raised flower-bed. Cp. Driver on *Joel*, *Camb. Bible*, p. 47. The points of comparison are the rounded form and the variegated colour.

as *sweet flowers*] This is rather a paraphrase than a translation. As they stand, the Heb. words *mighdĕlôth merqāchim* mean 'towers of perfume herbs.' 'Towers' is taken to be a synonym of *'arūghōth*, but if these are only raised garden-beds, this can hardly be. Probably we should read with the LXX, Targ. Vulg. *meghaddĕlōth* for *mighdĕlōth*, i.e. **rearing** or **producing perfumes**. The point of the comparison is the growth of a perfumed beard on the cheeks.

like *lilies*] The redness of the *shōshannāh* is the point here. Tristram thinks it is the *Anemone coronaria*. Cp. note on ii. 1.

sweet smelling myrrh] or **liquid myrrh** (R.V.), i.e. the finest myrrh, that oozes from the bark of itself. Cp. note on *v.* 5. The reference is to the perfume of the breath (cp. vii. 8).

14. *gold rings*] Rather, **cylinders of gold**. In Esth. i. 6, which is the only place in the O.T. besides this where the word occurs in a similar sense, it probably means 'rods' or 'cylinders.' Here it refers to the delicately rounded fingers forming the hand.

set] Cp. Ex. xxviii. 17.

the beryl] Better, *chrysolite*, i.e. *topaz* (R.V. marg.). His finger-nails are compared to transparent pink chrysolite.

his belly] R.V. rightly, **his body**. This is **a piece of ivory work**. Budde suggests a sheet of ivory.

overlaid with *sapphires*] R.V. margin, *encrusted*. What is meant is that his body was as beautiful as a piece of ivory work studded with sapphires. This is the only part of this description which might appear unmaidenly, but understood as above, it is quite compatible with the situation as supposed.

15. *His legs*] Heb. *shōq* is the part of the leg below the knee.

pillars of marble] i.e. white and firm like marble or **alabaster**. Here,

His countenance *is* as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. 16
This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among 6
women?
Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds 2
of spices,

seeing the lover is an Oriental, and therefore brown in complexion, alabaster would be the better comparison.

sockets] Perhaps rather, **bases** of fine gold.

his countenance] **his aspect is like Lebanon,** giving the same impression of majesty.

excellent] Heb. *bāchūr*='chosen,' LXX, *ἐκλεκτός*. The Targum translates it "a young man," but in that case we should have had 'a cedar,' not 'cedars.' **Goodly as the cedars** would fairly give the sense.

16. *His mouth*] Lit. *his palate*, but here as elsewhere the mouth as the organ of speech.

is *most sweet*] Rather, *is sweetnesses*. The meaning is that his mouth utters nothing but pleasant things; cp. Prov. xvi. 21. "This touch gives animation to the beautiful statue which has been described." Oettli.

yea, he is *altogether lovely*] Lit. *all of him is desirablenesses*, cp. Ezek. xxiv. 16, "the desire of thine eyes"=that in which thine eyes take delight.

This...this] She points triumphantly to her picture. Has she not more than answered the scornful question of *v.* 9?

Ch. vi. **1.** These words are parallel to ch. v. 9. In *v.* 8 the Shulammite had adjured the daughters of Jerusalem, if they found her beloved, to tell him she was sick for love. They ask what is there special about her beloved that they should do so. She answers by describing him. Moved by this, the daughters of Jerusalem are eager to seek him, and now ask whither he is gone.

Whither is thy beloved turned aside?] R.V. **Whither hath thy beloved turned him?**

2. The bride gives them an evasive answer, becoming jealous perhaps of their eager interest. She simply says he has gone forth to his usual haunts. Budde would strike out *vv.* 1—3, on the ground that the garden, the beds of spices, and the lilies are figures for the bride's person, as similar natural objects are in iv. 12 f., v. 13, ii. 16, v. 1. Here they cannot be that, since the bride is confessedly describing an absent lover, and they must consequently on his theory be put in by

To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
3 I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine:
He feedeth among the lilies.

someone who did not understand the other references. But this curious reversion to the allegorical interpretation of the Song in a physical sense, by the opponents of allegorical interpretation in a spiritual sense, must be rejected. In all the passages referred to, save ii. 16, which must be taken literally, the simile or metaphor is fully stated; the bride is like so and so, or her cheeks are so and so. No one, consequently, could possibly misunderstand them. Here the absence of any indication of simile makes the literal interpretation necessary, and so understood these verses have a perfectly natural and appropriate meaning. The similes referred to are taken in the first instance from surrounding nature, and when the Shulammite's lover disappears it would be among these surroundings he would disappear. Taken simply as they stand, the words mean that he has gone back for a time to his ordinary occupations, and she thinks of him as gathering a garland for her as he had often done before. Further, the expression *lilqōt shōshannīm* is in favour of this view. 'To pluck lilies' would be a very strange expression if lilies meant 'lips' here.

to feed] i.e. 'to feed the flock.'

3. Here she expresses her jealous feeling. They are not to search for him with her. That is her business alone, they have no claim to be even thus interested in him. She fears she has overshot the mark in the praises she has uttered concerning her beloved. She has held him up for their admiration, but seeing how great it is, she snatches him back as it were, lest she should lose him. 'I alone am his and he is mine, he who is feeding his flock among the lilies.'

Chap. VI. 4—13. The King fascinated.

Here we have a renewed assault by Solomon. Just after the Shulammite's impassioned claim to belong wholly to her lover her royal persecutor returns, and bursts out into praise of her physical beauty as before, *vv.* 4—9. In *v.* 10 he repeats the words used by the court ladies in praising her. In *vv.* 11—13 the Shulammite, ignoring Solomon, recalls what she was doing on the fatal day when she was so praised, and her attempt at flight from the court ladies.

4. *Tirzah*]=*pleasantness*, is mentioned in Josh. xii. 24. It was an ancient Canaanite city, famed as its name and our passage shew for its beautiful situation. It was the royal residence of the Northern kings from the time of the abandonment of Shechem by Jeroboam I till the 6th year of Omri, who left it for Samaria, but it was apparently still of importance in the time of Menahem (2 Kings xv. 14, 16). Neither the O.T. nor Josephus contains any indication as to the situation of Tirzah. But Brocardus in the 13th century, and Breydenbach in the 15th, mention a *Thersa*, three hours eastward of Samaria. Robinson, therefore, has identified it with the large village of *Talluza*, two-and-a-half hours E. of Samaria, and two hours

Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, 4
Comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as *an army* with banners.
Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome 5
me:

N. of Nablous. Conder, however, has suggested that the village of *Teiasir* may be Tirzah. It lies two-and-a-half hours to the N. of *Talluza*, and has been identified by Porter in Murray's *Guide-book*, 1858, with *Asher* a town of Manasseh, placed by Eusebius on the 15th mile from Neapolis to Scythopolis, anciently Bēthshe'ān. An objection which seems fatal is, that it lies too far from the great thoroughfare of the country for the ancient seat of the Israelite kings. From Tirzah being mentioned along with Jerusalem, this reference probably is to it as the capital of the N. kingdom. Its ancient rank as a Canaanite royal city can hardly have been in the writer's mind. Consequently, unless this be an interpolation, as Budde makes it, the Song cannot have been written by Solomon. But it does not prove that it was written during the period that Tirzah was the capital. For the name of the town at least was known up till the 15th century of our era, and the site must always have been beautiful. Therefore, if the writer of the Song was a Northern man, who knew its beauty and history, he might have inserted the reference centuries after it had become an unimportant place, or even a ruin. Tirzah may have been chosen along with Jerusalem instead of Samaria, because of the evil odour in which the latter was held after Nehemiah's day, or for its significant name and well-known beauty.

terrible as an army *with banners*] The last four words represent the Heb. word *nidhgālōth*, partic. niphal of a denominative from *deghel*=a banner. Cp. *dāghūl*, ch. v. 10: literally it would be 'beflagged things,' if we might coin such an expression; hence companies of soldiers gathered about a flag. Rightly the LXX, *θάμβος ὡς τεταγμέναι* (sc. *φάλαγγες*), a terror (i.e. terrible) as ranked (phalanxes). As Oettli remarks, this simile indicates that a king, not a shepherd, is speaking here. Whether the bannered hosts are terrible as overcoming, conquering, so that we have here praise of the Shulammite's beauty, or whether we have praise of her inaccessibility as frowning upon her flatterers, must be left to individual taste. The former seems simpler, but the latter agrees best with the next clause. Cheyne suspects corruption in the text (*Jew. Quart. Rev.* Jan. 1899). For Tirzah he would read *chabhatstseleth*, and for Jerusalem and the words following it, he would read *keshōshannath ămāqīm*. His translation would therefore be, 'Thou art fair, my friend, as the crocus, and comely as the lily of the valleys.' But this would make the verse a mere repetition of ii. 1.

for they have overcome me] Rather, **for they** [i.e. thine eyes] **have made me afraid**. The word translated 'overcome' in A.V. is found elsewhere in the O.T. only in Ps. cxxxviii. 3, where it is variously translated; A.V. 'thou didst strengthen,' R.V. 'encourage,' *Variorum*

Thy hair *is* as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.
6 Thy teeth *are* as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing,
Whereof every one beareth twins, and *there is* not one barren among them.
7 As a piece of a pomegranate *are* thy temples within thy locks.
8 There *are* threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,
And virgins without number.

Bib. 'make proud.' Here also some have taken it in this sense. But against that is the last clause of *v.* 4, and the "turn away" of *v.* 5. Moreover Hitzig has shewn that in Syr. and Arab. the forms corresponding to that here used in Heb. mean, 'to terrify.' The LXX seem to favour that view, for their translation *ἀνεπτέρωσάν με* may mean 'agitate me,' probably with fear (cp. *θάμβος* in the previous verse). This would suit the context best. It is not probable that there is in the words any reference to the magic of the evil eye.

From here to the end of *v.* 7 we have a mere repetition of iv. 1, 2, and 3*b*, with very slight variation. The only differences are that here we have 'from Gilead' instead of 'from mount Gilead,' and instead of 'shorn ewes,' simply, 'ewes.' For the commentary see iv. 1, &c. The repetition may be intended to indicate that the words are mere stock phrases in Solomon's mouth (Oettli), but more probably they are stock phrases taken by the poet from the marriage *wasfs*, which must have consisted mainly of just such phrases.

8. This is evidently a description of a hareem, and it can only be Solomon's own. The word translated *are* here is somewhat anomalous, and Budde would substitute 'to Solomon are.' But this is a much more moderate hareem than the account of Solomon's given in the historical books would lead us to expect, e.g. 1 Kings xi. 3, where we read of 700 wives and 300 concubines. Solomon being here the speaker, it is natural that he should in his present circumstances minimise the size of his establishment, and veil it under the vague last phrase.

queens] These are wives of royal birth.

concubines] Heb. *pīlaghshīm*, plur. of *pīlegesh* or *pillegesh*, appears in Greek as *πάλλαξ*, *παλλακή*, and is probably there a loan word from the Semitic peoples. But the derivation is unknown. Oettli says that as the king speaks here, he witnesses against Delitzsch's idea that he was united in marriage to the Shulammite in ch. v. 1, by using the word *tammāthī*, 'my undefiled'; but that is surely to press the word too far. Marriage was not regarded as impairing a woman's purity.

virgins] The word used here, *'ălāmōth*, does not necessarily mean 'virgins,' but young women of marriageable age. Consequently, either subordinate members of the hareem, or young women not yet, but about to be, taken into it are intended.

My dove, my undefiled *is but* one; 9
She *is* the *only* one of her mother,
She *is* the choice one of her that bare her.
The daughters saw her, and blessed her;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

9. but *one*] The *one* here is numerical in contrast to the 60 and 80: in the second clause of the verse *one* is qualitative, *unica* or *unice delecta*. As in ch. ii, he compares her to the women of the hareem, and intimates that she alone is worth them all.

the choice one] Heb. *bārāh* from *bārar*, 'to separate,' and hence 'to purify.' LXX, ἐκλεκτή. Here it is the former idea which predominates, the choice one, the darling of her mother, for the relation of mother and daughter is not one to which the idea of 'purity' is specially congruous. The only thing against this is that the adj. *bar* is not used in the O.T. in any sense but 'pure' or 'clean' (see *Oxf. Lex.*). But in 1 Chron. vii. 40 and elsewhere the verb is used in the sense of 'to choose' or 'select.' As the Song is late, but not so late as Chron. probably, it would not be unnatural that the later meaning should be found alongside the earlier in *vv.* 9 and 10 here.

The daughters saw her, and blessed her] Better, **daughters**, i.e. women, cp. Gen. xxx. 13 and Prov. xxxi. 29, **saw her and called her happy**. Cp. Prov. xxxi. 28, where the whole of this clause substantially occurs.

the queens and the concubines, and they praised her] Cp. ch. v. 9, "O thou fairest among women." On the hypothesis that the book is a mere collection of wedding songs, this statement that the women of Solomon's hareem had seen and praised the Shulammite would be absurd. On our view, it would be quite natural, and unless the bride be brought in some such way as we suppose into connexion with Solomon's court it is impossible to imagine how this verse could be true. Budde admits the difficulty, but gets over it in a very light-hearted fashion. He admits that a figure of speech which would permit the bridegroom who is called Solomon only because he is a bridegroom, to refer with scorn to the hareem of the actual Solomon, would be bold; but in a somewhat obscure sentence he says it hardly goes beyond what is possible in the circumstances as he supposes them to be. Few, we imagine, will be of that opinion.

10. These words evidently express the admiration of the ladies of the court for the Shulammite. Most commentators who regard the book as a connected whole take *v.* 10 to be the praises referred to in the previous verse. Verse 9 would then end with a colon, and *saying* must be understood. The R.V. however marks a paragraph. Oettli emphasises the tense, and they *praised* her, and regards the words as those used by the court ladies when she was first met by the royal party. This is much the best hypothesis, for it gives a connecting point for the next verses as the words of the Shulammite. Delitzsch, on the other hand, makes this the beginning of a new act, and supposes that the Shulammite

10 Who *is* she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
And terrible as *an army* with banners?

11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley,
And to see whether the vine flourished, *and* the pomegranates budded.

12 Or ever I was aware,
My soul made me *like* the chariots of Ammi-nadib.

walks forth from some recess in the royal gardens and is greeted by the ladies with these words.

looketh forth as the morning] Better, **as the dawn**, i.e. as the dawn looks forth over the eastern hills, cp. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I. sc. 1,

"But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

clear] This is the word translated "choice one" in the previous verse, but it must mean *clear* here.

terrible as an army *with banners*] It is a marked peculiarity of the Song to repeat similes and epithets. They are introduced first for some special reason, then immediately they seem to crystallise into standing epithets. Cp. "feeding among the lilies." The words used here for *sun* and *moon* are not the ordinary ones *shemesh* and *yārēach*, but *chammāh*, lit. 'heat,' and *lĕbhānāh*, lit. 'whiteness,' exclusively poetic names, found together again in Is. xxiv. 23, xxx. 26.

11—13. The bride speaks here. According to Oettli, the words of the court ladies were spoken on the fatal day when Solomon first saw her. This carries her back to that time, and ignoring Solomon's pleadings and flatteries, as she always does, she recalls what she was doing then. Translate accordingly, **I had gone down**, &c. Delitzsch regards the words as an account of what she has just been doing, and as revealing her modest acceptance of her unexpected elevation, and her delight still in simple country pleasures. This would seem to be Budde's view also. In accepting that view Budde admits once more that the poem, as we have it, has dramatic movement and connexion.

11. *nuts*] Heb. *'ĕghōz*, a word found here only in the O.T., Arab. *gawz*, Syr. *gauzo*, Pers. *djauz*, dialectically *aghuz*. Probably it is borrowed from the Persian, like *pardēs*. It is properly the *walnut*, which is a native of Persia; Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 413. It is largely cultivated in N. Palestine.

the fruits of the valley] Rather, **the green plants of the valley**, as in R.V. The A.V. has followed the LXX and the Targum, probably, in translating the word for green plants by *fruits*. But cp. Job viii. 12, where the word is used of the rush, "while it is yet *in its greenness*."

to see whether...the pomegranates budded] R.V. **were in flower.**

12. This is probably the most difficult verse in the whole book to

Return, return, O Shulamite;
Return, return, that we may look upon thee. 13

interpret satisfactorily. Perhaps it may best be rendered as in R.V. **my soul** (or, **desire**, marg.) **set me among the chariots of my princely people.** That *nephesh* may mean 'appetite' or 'desire' is clear from Prov. xxiii. 2. So taken, the words would mean that when she was engaged in inspecting and enjoying the gardens, suddenly, before she knew, her longing to see the plants brought her among the chariots of her noble people, i.e. of noble people who were hers, i.e. rulers of her land. She suddenly came upon the train of King Solomon, as they were on the way from or to some royal dwelling in the North. But it must be confessed that the translation of Ammi-nadib as 'my princely people' is not very satisfactory, though the omission of the article with the adj. after a noun defined by a pronominal suffix is not uncommon. (Cp. Ges.-K. *Gramm.* § 126, *h* and 2). The text may be corrupt, but the extensive changes of reading proposed by Budde, Grätz, and Cheyne do not mend matters much, and are none of them convincing. But if the meaning we have found in these words is even generally correct, it is fatal to Budde's theory that the book is a mere collection of unconnected marriage songs. Nothing can be made of them on that hypothesis, and all who support it have to get rid of them, either by amending them, or excising them.

13. It is not clear at once who the speaker in this verse is. There must be either more than one person concerned in it, or quotation, for there is an evident interchange of question and answer. Probably we should, with Oettli, assign the verse to the bride. She is rehearsing all that happened on the eventful day when Solomon came upon her. When she found herself among the royal chariots she turned to flee, and the ladies called to her to return. Hearing the call, she stopped to ask, 'Why would ye gaze at the Shulammite as upon the dance of Mahanaim'? See below.

O **Shulammite**] This name for the bride occurs here only, and cannot be a proper name, otherwise even in the vocative there would be no article, as there is here. It must, therefore, mean 'maiden of Shulam' (cp. the Shunammite, 1 Kings i. 3). Not knowing her name, the courtiers call her by the name of the village near which they were when they saw her. This village was doubtless Shunem, in the plains of Esdraelon, which belonged to the tribe of Issachar. It has been identified by Robinson (*Researches*, II. 325) with the modern *Solam*, a village in the neighbourhood of Jezreel on the southern slope of the east end of Little Hermon, as Nain is upon its northern slope. From the fact that the modern name has *l* for *n*, it is probable that Shulam is a later form than Shunem.

that we may look upon thee] The Heb. verb with the construction it has here means generally 'to look upon with pleasure,' but also simply 'to gaze at' (cp. Is. xlvii. 13). In the first clause here we have the first meaning, in the second the other according to many expositors. In this latter case, "What will ye see" should be *What would ye gaze at?*

What will ye see in the Shulamite?
As it were the company of two armies.

But it is better to keep the same meaning and translate, **Why would ye look upon the Shulammite?**

As it were the company of two armies] The R.V. gives **As upon the dance of Mahanaim?** and probably this is the right translation. As she endeavours to escape, the Shulammite asks, would they stare at her as at a public spectacle. Some have thought that there is a reference here to the angel hosts from which Jacob is said to have named the place (Gen. xxxii. 2). But there is no hint that there was anything resembling a dance in their movements. The probability, therefore, is that after Jacob's vision Mahanaim became a holy place, if it was not one before, and that God was there praised in the dance (cp. Jud. xxi. 21), and that these dances had become famous either for their gracefulness or for their splendour. That Mahanaim was a place of importance, whether for political or for religious reasons or for both, is clear from the fact that Ishbosheth, Saul's son, set up his kingdom there, and that David fled thither when he was driven away from Jerusalem by Absalom. It was also a Levitical city. It lay to the N. of the Jabbok not far from the valley of the Jordan, on the heights above that valley. Its exact site is unknown, as it can hardly have been *el-Michne* as Robinson supposes, for that is too far both from the Jabbok and from the Jordan. That places were famed for dances is shewn by the name *Abel-Mecholah*= 'Dance meadow.' The R.V. has in the margin, "a dance of two companies." This might be supposed to be a dance specially worth seeing. Such a dance is described by Wetzstein, who says that in the Gof, or as Palgrave writes it, the Djowf, a region of N. Arabia, there is a variety of the dance called *Sahga*, which is danced by two companies of men standing opposite each other, as in our country dances. But these Bedouin and Arab customs have no known connexion with the people west of the Jordan. Budde would change the dual into the plural and would read *machanim* and translate "as upon a camp dance," i.e. 'a sword dance,' which forms part of the marriage customs Wetzstein describes. But a *camp* dance would be a very odd name for the *sword* dance, and though it is true that the place-name Mahanaim does not occur with the article, the article here may quite well define the *dance*, not *Mahanaim*.

Chap. VII. 1—6. The Praises of the Ladies of the Hareem.

This song or section contains the praises of the Shulammite by the ladies of the hareem; but the circumstances under which the words are spoken are in no way indicated. Some, as Oettli, would make it part of the previous scene. But we can hardly suppose that her dress in the presence of Solomon would be such as to suggest the kind of references to her person here made. It would rather seem to us that they were made in the privacy of the women's apartments, when the Shulammite was being dressed by the women of the court to receive Solomon.

How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's 7
daughter!
The joints of thy thighs *are* like jewels,
The work of the hands of a cunning workman.
Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth not 2
liquor:

In that case it would stand by itself as a separate picture. The object of this fulsome flattery would be to induce her to accept the king's addresses. The phrase 'a king is prisoner in its locks' (*v.* 5) is the climax, and reveals the purpose of the whole.

1. *thy feet with shoes*] Lit. **thy steps in sandals.** Budde emphasises the fact that the feet are not spoken of here, but the steps, i.e. in his view the dancing movements of the feet in the sword dance. Oettli on the other hand emphasises the shoes, pointing out that the country maiden had probably not worn them before, but the ladies say how well she walks, and how well they become her. The latter is the sense which accords best with the view of the poem which we have taken.

O prince's daughter] This does not mean that the bride was actually of a noble family. Even if Budde's interpretation of the poem were accepted, it would be a strange thing to call the bride a nobleman's daughter, for it would be ridiculous to call a peasant bride, who was a queen only as a bride, a prince's daughter, and even if Abishag were referred to she was not that either. Nor can the phrase be a substitute for queen, for strictly speaking Solomon's queens were not noblemen's but kings' daughters. On the dramatic view, *bath nādhībh* must mean 'a born lady' as we say, i.e. one who would adorn any station. Siegfried thinks that the words arise from a confusion with the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings iv. 8, who is called 'a great woman,' i.e. a woman of good position. Cheyne would read here, as in vi. 12, *daughter of delights*. That would suit our view admirably, but there seems to be no sufficient support for it.

The joints of thy thighs are *like jewels*] Probably this should be rendered as in the R.V. margin, **Thy rounded thighs are like jewels**, except that the diminutive force which the word 'jewels' has is rather inappropriate here, where some large ornament must be meant. The graceful curves of the hips are for beauty of form like ornaments. Some with less probability explain the word to mean the rhythmical movements of the dance.

a cunning workman] *Cunning*, of course, is used here in the old sense of 'skilful,' and probably *'ommān* is equivalent to *'āmōn*, a skilled artisan. Stade, *Gramm.* p. 12, gives it as a word of the Northern dialect.

2. *Thy navel*] Better, **Thy body.**

which *wanteth not*] This should be *let not liquor be wanting.*

liquor] Heb. *mezegh* is wine mixed with snow or water.

Thy belly *is like* a heap of wheat set about with lilies.
3 Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes *that are* twins.
4 Thy neck *is* as a tower of ivory;
Thine eyes *like* the *fish*pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim:
Thy nose *is* as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.
5 Thine head upon thee *is* like Carmel,

thy belly is like *a heap of wheat*] The point of the comparison is the yellowish-white colour of wheat threshed and winnowed, which is considered in Syria the perfect colour of the human skin. The soft curves of such a heap may also be referred to. The lilies may possibly indicate some part of the dress, but most probably belong to the simile only. Heaps of corn are still decorated with flowers on festal occasions, and the contrast of the scarlet lilies or anemones would bring out the colour of the grain.

3. This is a repetition of iv. 5, with the exception that the lilies of that passage are omitted here, as they have been mentioned in the preceding verse.

4. *a tower of ivory*] Not a tower entirely built of ivory, but some well-known tower, or kind of tower, adorned with enriching panels or medallions of ivory. Cp. "the ivory palaces," Ps. xlv. 8, and "the divans of ivory," Am. vi. 4, and Driver's note there. A tower-like neck has always been regarded as beautiful.

the fish*pools in Heshbon*] **the pools**. The A.V. follows the Vulg. *piscinae*. Heshbon was the ancient capital of Sihon king of the Amorites. Probably it had before that belonged to Moab (Num. xxi. 27 ff.). After the conquest by Moses it was assigned to the tribe of Reuben; but in Isaiah's time it had long been in the hands of Moab again. To-day it is represented by a large mound in the *Wady Hesban*, and among the ruins a large well-built tank has been found, which is probably one of the pools referred to here, as it lies outside the walls. The point of comparison is the soft shimmer of the eyes.

by the gate of Bath-rabbim] i.e. either opposite a gate which led to a place called by this name, or the gate of the populous city, literally 'the daughter of many.' But if the latter had been intended, 'mother' would have been more appropriate and natural than 'daughter.' But cp. "daughter of troops," Micah v. 1 (iv. 14, Heb.).

thy nose is *as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus*] This comparison seems to us inappropriate, for though we cannot now ascertain what particular tower was meant, the probability is that it was some watch-tower placed in a lofty and impregnable position on Anti-Libanus, to keep watch upon, or to overawe Damascus. The writer must have regarded a prominent nose as a beautiful feature.

5. *Thine head upon thee* is *like Carmel*] Mount Carmel, looked at from the North especially, is the crown of the country, towering over sea and land in solitary majesty; hence the comparison to a head

And the hair of thine head like purple;
The king *is* held in the galleries.
How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! 6

proudly held. The A.V. margin, following some Jewish authorities, renders 'crimson,' regarding *karmel* as equivalent to *karmīl*, and Ginsburg, adopting this explanation, thinks that the words mean that her hair was arranged in the form of a murex shell.

the hair of thine head] The word translated 'hair,' which occurs nowhere else in the O.T., appears to mean **flowing tresses.**

like purple] Apparently the text means to indicate that the bride's hair was of that intense black which is sometimes called blue black. For *argāmān* see note on iii. 10.

the king is *held in the galleries*] Better (cp. R.V.), **a king is held captive in the tresses thereof.** The word translated 'tresses' occurs in the O.T. three times only, Gen. xxx. 38, 41, and Ex. ii. 16, where it means 'water troughs.' The connexion between these and a woman's hair is not obvious, unless it be that it flows down like water from a water trough. That is hardly satisfactory, but that tresses is intended seems certain. The idea of a lover being held captive in the hair of his lady is common in the love poetry of all lands. Cp. Lovelace's poem *To Althea from Prison*:

"When I lie tangled in her hair,
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty."

Budde and Siegfried take the 'king' here to mean as usual the young husband of the king's week. But in that case it would more naturally be *the* king.

6. *for delights*] Better, **among delights,** i.e. how surpassingly delightful is love above all other pleasures of life. The word translated *delights* does not necessarily, or even generally, mean sensuous delights, as some say. Cp. Prov. xix. 10; Micah i. 16 and ii. 9. This sudden turn to the praise of love, not the beloved, is abrupt, but it has frequent parallels in the love poetry of the East, cp. the ode written out for Wetzstein at Kenakir. (Cp. his *Essay on the Threshing-Board, loc. cit.*) That the Heb. verb *yāphāh* may be used of love in this abstract sense may be inferred from Ez. xxviii. 7, where the noun of this root is used in a similar abstract way in the phrase, "the beauty of thy wisdom."

Chap. VII. 7—Chap. VIII. 4. The King and the Shepherdess —the last Assault.

We may suppose that after her attendants have completed the Shulammite's adornment, and have finished their fulsome praises of her beauty, she receives a new visit from the king. In verses 7—9 he gives utterance to his admiration in more sensuous terms than ever, and in *v.* 9 *b* she turns his talk aside, and dwells upon her lover. In *v.* 10 she gives her final answer in the exclamation that she belongs to him alone.

7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
And thy breasts to clusters *of grapes.*
8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of the boughs thereof:
Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy nose like apples;
9 And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine,
For my beloved, that goeth *down* sweetly,
Causing the lips of *those that are* asleep to speak.

The king then withdraws, and in *vv.* 11—13 she lets her heart go out to her absent lover, and calls upon him to go back with her into their obscure but happy country life. In viii. 1—3 she expresses a wish that he were her brother, so that she might love him without reproach, and concludes in *v.* 4 with a modification of the adjuration in ii. 7 and iii. 5.

7. *This thy stature*] or as we should say, *this form of thine.*

is like to a palm tree] This is a very favourite figure with Oriental poets, graceful slenderness and tall stature being specially admired. Hence *Tamar* = 'palm' was a frequent woman's name.

clusters of grapes] Heb. *ashkōlōth*, not necessarily of grapes. Cp. ch. i. 14, where we have a cluster of henna, and here the clusters of ripe dates hanging from the palm are evidently meant. Oettli thinks their sweetness, not their form, the point of the comparison.

8. *I said*] *I have said* or *thought* = I am minded to climb up the palm tree to take hold of its branches.

now also thy breasts shall be, &c.] Better, as R.V., **let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine.**

the smell of thy nose] i.e. as R.V. paraphrases, giving the meaning correctly, **the smell of thy breath like apples.**

9. *and the roof of thy mouth*] Better, as R.V., **and thy mouth.** *Chēkh* is the palate, but it is used for the mouth. Cp. ch. v. 16; Hos. viii. 1. The reference here as in v. 16 is to the sweet words of love which she whispers, they intoxicate like wine.

for my beloved, that goeth down *sweetly*] This should be, as in R.V., **that goeth down smoothly for my beloved.** Instead of *smoothly*, R.V. marg. gives 'aright.' Cp. for the phrase Prov. xxiii. 31, R.V. and margin. Budde would read *lĕchikkī*, 'for my palate,' instead of *lĕdhōdhī*, 'for my beloved,' but there is no support for such a change in any version or MS. The translation of the A.V. is according to the accents, but most recent commentators, who take the dramatic or semi-dramatic view of the whole, assign these words to the bride, supposing that she interrupts the king and turns off the simile to her beloved.

causing the lips of those that are *asleep to speak*] Better, as R.V., **gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.** The A.V. may, following Jerome and Kimchi, have connected the word *dōbhrēbh* with *dibbāh*, a calumny or evil rumour, or they may have read *dōbhĕr* or *me-*

I *am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* towards me. 10
Come, my beloved, let us go forth *into* the field; 11
Let us lodge in the villages.
Let us get up early to the vineyards; 12
Let us see if the vine flourish, *whether* the tender grape appear,
And the pomegranates bud forth:
There will I give thee my loves.
The mandrakes give a smell, 13

dhabbēr. But *dōbhēbh* has no connexion with *dibbāh*, but is rather related to *zābh*, and means 'to go softly,' hence the translation 'going softly' or 'gliding' over the lips of sleepers, or of those about to sleep. The whole clause would then mean that this wine was such that men drank it till they were rendered slumberous by it. But this is not very satisfactory, and the suggestion that, following the LXX, Aq., Syr., Vulg., we should read 'gliding over my lips and teeth,' or 'over his lips and teeth,' might perhaps be adopted.

10. In this verse the bride openly rejects the king whom she had already tacitly rejected, saying, 'I belong to my beloved alone, and he on his part longs after me only.' As Oettli says, the words should be conceived as uttered with an almost triumphant gesture of rejection towards Solomon. Budde supposes *v.* 10 to be perhaps an editorial connecting clause borrowed from ch. ii. 16, as Martineau and Bickell also do.

11. *let us lodge in the villages*] The verb *lūn*='to pass the night,' does not always mean a passing sojourn. Consequently there is no hint here that the home of the Shulammite and her lover was distant several days' journey. The verb is often used where simply 'dwelling,' 'remaining,' is meant; but it must be admitted that the cases where this meaning is clear are nearly all figurative, e.g. Job xix. 4, xli. 22; Ps. xlix. 12 (Heb. *v.* 13).

in the villages] The Heb. *bak-kĕphārīm* may mean *among the henna flowers*, as in ch. iv. 13, or *among the villages*. Either signification would give a good meaning here, but perhaps the former is preferable. 'Let us dwell among the henna flowers' would suit the tone of the passage best.

12. *if the vine flourish*] **whether the vine hath budded**, R.V. Cp. vi. 11.

whether *the tender grape appear*] Rather, **and its blossom be open**, R.V. For the word *semādhar*='blossom,' cp. ch. ii. 13, 15. It is found nowhere else in the O.T.

there will I give thee] There, in contrast to here and now. As Oettli remarks, first freedom, then love.

13. *The mandrakes give a smell*] Heb. *had-dūdhā'īm* (LXX, οἱ μανδραγόραι), lit. 'love plants.' The mandrake is fully described in Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* pp. 466 ff. It belongs to the family of plants to

And at our gates *are* all *manner of* pleasant *fruits*,
New and old,
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.
8 O that thou *wert* as my brother, that sucked the breasts
of my mother!
When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;
Yea, I should not be despised.

which the potato belongs. The flowers are cup-shaped, of a rich purple colour. The fruit has a peculiar but decidedly not unpleasant smell, and a pleasant, sweet taste. In Groser's *Script. Nat. Hist.*, Mariti is quoted to the following effect: "The fruit when ripe, in the beginning of May, is of the size and colour of a small apple, exceedingly ruddy and of a most agreeable odour. Our guide thought us fools for suspecting it to be unwholesome. He ate it freely himself, and it is generally valued by the inhabitants as exhilarating their spirits." It is mentioned here as denoting the time of year, May, the time of the wheat harvest, or for its pleasant smell, not, as in Gen. xxx. 14—16, as an aphrodisiac.

and at our gates are *all* manner of *pleasant* fruits] Rather, **over our doors**. This would seem to indicate that in village houses it was the custom to lay up fruits on shelves or in cupboards placed above the doorways.

pleasant fruits] or, as R.V., **precious fruits**. Cp. ch. iv. 13, 16.

which *I have laid up*] This relative clause refers to the old fruits, as the new fruits were only now ripening. If Solomon were the bridegroom it is difficult to see how the shepherdess could have laid up fruits for him, as she had not been home since he carried her away.

Ch. viii. 1. *O that thou* wert *as my brother*] *As* should probably be omitted, as the accidental repetition of the last letter of the preceding word. She wishes that her lover were her brother. That she should wish that being her lover he were in the same position in regard to her as a brother would have occupied, does not seem to be likely. What she desires is freedom to love him and to express that love. Had he been her brother she would have had that liberty. Only the uterine brother and the father's brother's son have among the Bedawin the right to kiss a maiden. Cp. Wetzstein, *ZDMG.* XXII. pp. 93, 108. Such a wish as this seems quite incompatible with the view that the Song is a collection of songs sung at weddings after the marriage has been consummated.

when *I should find thee without, I would kiss thee*] Better, **so that, should I find thee without, I might kiss thee, and yet none would despise me**. She would in that case be doing nothing unmaidenly, nothing for which she could be held in contempt, in shewing her love.

2. The bride thinks with delight of the close familiar intercourse she would in that case have had with him.

I would lead thee, *and* bring thee into my mother's 2
house, *who* would instruct me:
I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice
of my pomegranate.
His left hand *should be* under my head, 3
And his right hand should embrace me.
I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, 4
That ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, until he please.

who *would instruct me*] The verb here may be either 3rd pers. sing. fem. as the A.V. takes it, or 2nd pers. sing. masc. as the Vulgate and Targum take it. In the latter case the translation would be, 'thou wilt instruct me,' or as R.V. margin, 'that thou mightest instruct me.' If we adopt the former view, the meaning must be that the Shulammite's mother would instruct her how to play a maiden's part to her betrothed lover; if the latter, that her lover would be able to impart to her his wisdom. But in both cases the wish that he had been her brother must be understood to have been given up, or lost sight of; and in the latter it may be doubted whether this exaltation of the wisdom of the beloved is an Eastern trait at all, unless the instruction is instruction in agriculture, as Oettli suggests, comparing Is. xxviii. 23—28 and ch. vii. 12. That is surely too prosaic. But in ch. iii. 4 the clause "until I had brought him into my mother's house" is followed by the words, "and into the chamber of her that conceived me," and the LXX and the Syriac actually have these words here in place of *who would instruct me*. This reading would keep the whole clause in harmony with the wish in *v.* 1, and probably should be accepted.

of the juice of my pomegranate] Rather, **my new pomegranate wine**. *'Asīs* is the juice of grapes or other fruit, trodden out in the wine-press and fermented quickly; cp. Is. xlix. 26, "As with *'āsīs* they shall be drunk with their own blood"; Joel i. 5, iii. 18; Amos ix. 13. Tristram (*Nat. Hist.* p. 388) says of the pomegranate, "The juice was and still is expressed for a cooling drink, or sherbet, and sometimes also fermented into a light wine. It is now commonly used in the East with sugar or spices, and then strained before being fermented. The wine of the pomegranate does not keep long and is very light."

3. The bride here repeats in other words what she has already spoken of in *v.* 1, and losing herself in the anticipation of that which she had before regarded only as a possibility, she drops into the use of the third personal pronoun in her rapture, though she has been addressing her lover hitherto.

4. *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem*] Rather, as in R.V., **I adjure you...nor awaken love, until it please.** This verse is a repetition of ii. 7 and iii. 5 with the difference that, instead of *im=that...not*, we have here *mah=why*. The A.V. translates this *mah* as 'not.' Cp. Job xxxi. 1, where an interrogative *mah* is translated **οὐ** by the LXX and *non* by the Vulg. But in form our clause is interrogative, 'Why

5 Who *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?

I raised thee up under the apple tree:

would ye stir up or awake love until it should please?' i.e. you see it was quite unnecessary to try to rouse love before its time. Your experience must teach you how vain it has been to attempt to arouse it prematurely, and how certain it would be to awake at the proper time.

Chap. VIII. 5—7. The Return in the Might of Love.

The scene depicted in these verses is the return of the Shulammite with her lover to the village. As they draw near she leans upon him in weariness, and they are observed by some of the villagers, who ask the question in *v.* 5*a*. The lovers meantime come slowly on, and as they come he points out an apple tree under which he had once found her sleeping and awaked her, and then as they come in sight of it, he points to her birthplace, her mother's home. In *vv.* 6 and 7 the Shulammite utters that great panegyric of love which is the climax and glory of the book. Because of this power of love which she feels in her heart she beseeches her lover to bind her closely to himself. For the Wetzstein-Budde theory these verses are full of insuperable difficulty. Such personal details as we have here cannot be made to fit into a collection of general wedding songs, and the advocates of that view have simply to give them up as a mere congeries of fragments. Taken as above, everything is simple, intelligible and natural.

5. *the wilderness*] i.e. the uncultivated open pasture lands round the village. This again is an insurmountable difficulty for Budde, as the same word in iii. 6 was. Siegfried boldly tries to get over the difficulty by saying that the threshing-floor lay in the *midhbār*, and in Wetzstein's account the marriage procession is said to move from the chaff-barn towards the threshing-floor. But unfortunately, the procession, if procession it be, is described as coming *from* the *midhbār*. Moreover, to make the threshing-floor a part of the *midhbār* is unheard of.

leaning upon her beloved] i.e. she was supporting herself as weary with the journey.

I raised thee] The pronouns *thee* and *thy* in the last clauses of this verse are masculine in the Massoretic text, and consequently make the Shulammite address the bridegroom. But the Syriac, which is followed by many commentators, reads the pronouns as feminine. The question is one of vowels, as the consonantal text is the same for both readings, and in all probability the feminine suffixes are correct, for no one's mother but the bride's has hitherto been spoken of, and the words are better suited to the bridegroom than to the bride. The clause should

There thy mother brought thee forth:
There she brought *thee* forth *that* bare thee.
Set me as a seal upon thine heart, 6
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love *is* strong as death;
Jealousy *is* cruel as the grave:
The coals thereof *are* coals of fire,
Which hath a most vehement flame.

be rendered as in the R.V. *I awakened thee.* The lover, as he approaches the maiden's home, points out places that are memorable to him. Under this apple tree he had, perhaps, kissed her awake. Cp. Tennyson's *Sleeping Beauty*. This is better than, 'here I first aroused thy love.'

there] i.e. *yonder*, not under the apple tree, but in the house they are approaching.

thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee *forth* that *bare thee*] Better, as in the R.V., *thy mother was in travail with thee, there was she in travail that brought thee forth.*

6. As seals are not impressed upon the heart, nor upon the arm, we must understand here the ring seals which were bound round the neck with a cord (Gen. xxxviii. 18) and carried in the bosom, or which were worn on the finger (Jer. xxii. 24). This last passage interprets the bride's request. She wishes to be united in the closest way with her lover, and to be valued as his most precious possessions were valued. Cp. Hag. ii. 23. Budde, perhaps rightly, would put for the second *châthōm* = 'seal,' some word like *tsāmīdh*, signifying a bracelet. Cp. Tennyson's *Miller's Daughter*, where the lover longs to be a jewel in his lady's ear:

"It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel,
That trembles in her ear."

strong as death] Love is as irresistible as death, which none can escape.

jealousy is *cruel as the grave*] Jealousy is as unrelenting as Sheol, the place of the dead, from which none can ever escape; cp. Prov. xxvii. 20. The meaning is that love and jealousy have irresistible power over those whom they bring under their sway. Her reference to jealousy would seem to shew that she fears the effect of her love upon herself, if he should not join himself indissolubly with her.

the coals thereof are *coals of fire*] R.V. **The flashes thereof are flashes of fire.** Love glows and burns in the heart like flame.

a most vehement flame] Heb. *shalhebheth yāh, a flame of Jah*, i.e. a flame of supernatural power, one that is kindled and cherished by God. Ewald with fair probability suggests that we should read, *its flames are flames of Jah*. For the thought compare Browning's *Any Wife to any Husband*,

7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
It would utterly be contemned.

"It would not be because my eye grew dim
Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him
Who never is dishonoured in the spark
He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade
Remember whence it sprang, nor be afraid
While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark."

7. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*] Better, *neither can rivers drown it.* The word translated *drown* may also mean *sweep away* (cp. Is. xxviii. 17): but as love has just been compared to a fire, and the waters in the first clause are said not to be able to *quench* it, it seems necessary to give to the verb in this clause the similar meaning of *drown* which it also has. Cp. Ps. lxix. 2. All this she has felt, and she beseeches her lover never to let her go, since otherwise she would be utterly forlorn and given up to the fury of unrelenting jealousy. In these verses we have the climax of the book. Even Budde says *vv.* 6 and 7 undoubtedly contain the deepest thing said of love in the book. The sensuous aspect of love falls entirely into the background, the whole nature is irresistibly seized and indissolubly bound to the beloved one. But that is not enough. It is towards this declaration that the author has been making from the first. Consequently this ethical conception of love should be regarded as underlying all that goes before, and the book thought of as a unity. The writer of these words must have had an ideal of love, with which the coarseness, inevitably found even in the most simple and deeply felt descriptions of natural scenery by those who regard the book as a collection of professional laudations of the more sensuous side of marriage, is totally incompatible. And this ideal must have been an elevating influence of very great importance for the moral life of a people among whom marriage was a mere matter of contract, and the price given for the bride a subject of pride, as it still is among Orientals. Immediately and inevitably this statement of the nature of love leads on to a condemnation of the common point of view in an arrow-like phrase, which having first transfixed the gorgeous and voluptuous Solomon, goes straight to the heart of the ordinary practice of the time.

if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned] Better, **he would be utterly despised**. Literally, the words are 'men would utterly despise him,' or, 'it.' In this Budde sees only an ordinary commonplace of popular poetry. But surely its connexion with the previous verses raises it far above that level. It is the practical application of the deepest thing said in the book. But in any case it could not have been a commonplace at

We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: 8
What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

marriages such as have been described. To sing words like these at an ordinary Oriental wedding would have been little short of unseemly.

Chap. VIII. 8—14. Reminiscences and Triumphs.

This section is one of those which weigh heavily on the side of the view that the Song is a series of dramatic lyrics rather than a connected drama. For as Oettli admits, it is very difficult to find place for such a scene as this in a drama. But taken as a dramatic lyric it has an almost exact analogy in Tennyson's *Maud*, which he calls a melodrama, and which is made up of separate but connected poems. There we have in Part VII a song of four verses, referring to a conversation remembered by the hero of the poem as having taken place between his father and Maud's, regarding his future marriage, if the child of the latter, at that time only expected, should prove to be a daughter. It is introduced quite abruptly as this song is here, and the circumstances have to be gathered from the words:

"Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me,
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty, so let it be'";

and so on. Following that analogy, we have to imagine the bride now returned to her home and recalling what she had heard her brothers (i. 6) say of her in the past (*vv.* 8 and 9). For the little sister is the Shulammite herself, as the choice of the figure of a wall for herself in *v.* 10 shews. She recalls it, however, only to point out how unnecessary their anxiety about her had proved. In *vv.* 11 and 12 she finally shews her scorn for Solomon and his wealth. In *v.* 13 her lover calls upon her to sing to his comrades; *v.* 14 contains the words she sings.

8, 9. The Shulammite recalls her brothers' scornful speeches.

8. *she hath no breasts*] She is not yet of marriageable age.

in the day when she shall be spoken for] i.e. when she is asked in marriage. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 39, R.V. This conversation too does not fit in well with Budde's view, for it clearly implies some special story told of particular persons. How it could appear in a collection of songs for use at weddings in general it is difficult to see. The anger of the brothers mentioned in ch. i. 6, and the sending of their sister into the vineyards, together with their over-anxiety here, can hardly be circumstances which regularly occurred and were regularly introduced in the songs at weddings. Budde says indeed that we have nothing here but an Oriental version of what is found in popular songs in Europe where the mother is informed very plainly that the daughter is grown up and seeks marriage. But that is by no means a parallel case. It is not the

9 If she *be* a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver:
And if she *be* a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.
10 I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers:
Then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon;

general fact of growing up unnoticed from childhood to womanhood that is dealt with here. It is such circumstances as can be accounted for only by events which were related in some well-known story.

9. *If she* be *a wall*] i.e. if she resist attacks and preserve her innocence, they will reward her by building upon her a battlement or turret of silver, i.e. they will adorn her, perhaps for her marriage, as the bride in ancient times wore a crown.

and if she be *a door*] i.e. if she be ready to permit an enemy to pass her defences, then they will fasten her up with a plank of cedar. The meaning is, that as men prevent a door from opening by fastening a plank across so that it cannot move, so they will take measures to prevent her from yielding to her weakness. The Heb. *deleth* means always strictly a door, never a doorway, which is *pethach*.

cedar] The plank is to be of cedar, because the wood of that tree is specially tough and indestructible, not at all like the soft red American cedar.

10. *I* am *a wall*] or, *I* have been *a wall*. The bride here proudly claims that she has proved herself the sufficient guardian of her own honour. All her brothers' anxieties were idle.

then was I in his eyes, &c.] The most obvious explanation of this phrase is that the Shulammite explains her return in safety by saying, 'I have been, throughout, a wall and my breasts like towers, then was I in his (my oppressor's) eyes *as one finding peace*': that is to say, he dealt with her as a king deals with a city which he cannot capture, he made peace. This fits in admirably with the view that the bride had been besieged by Solomon's attentions, and that she had resisted them. It also accounts for the mention of Solomon again in *vv.* 11 and 12. If 'his' be taken to refer to the lover, then the meaning would be: 'When I had shewn my chastity and constancy, then I was in his eyes as one finding peace,' i.e. I was favoured in my lover's eyes. Budde, Siegfried, and Delitzsch can find no satisfactory explanation of this clause on their theories of the book.

11. Following up the same train of thought, that love could not be bought, she speaks of Solomon as a vineyard proprietor of exceptional wealth, who, as she implies, had attempted to add her to his possessions. He had failed in this, for her vineyard, the only wealth she has, viz. her person and her love, are in her own power, and Solomon will have to be content with the material riches he possesses. Some think that these verses are spoken by the bridegroom, but that is hardly so natural as that the bride, who has just been recalling her victory over Solomon, should continue her reminiscences.

Solomon had a vineyard] The meaning of this sentence might be

He let out the vineyard unto keepers;
Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand
pieces of silver.
My vineyard, which *is* mine, *is* before me:
Thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

expressed with or without the verb *hāyāh*. The verb being used here, some insist that Solomon is thereby thrust away back into the past, and cannot therefore be an actor in the book. But that is not necessary; cp. Is. v. 1, where the verb in the past tense is used of a vineyard still in its owner's possession. The effect of the verb there is to shew that the possession of the vineyard extends over some considerable time. It involves a retrospect. That would seem to be the case here also. The bride is looking back over her past. She has just been speaking slightingly both of her brothers' watchfulness and of Solomon's wealth. If we might suppose that her brothers were the keepers of the king's vineyard at Baal-hamon, then it would be very natural that her thoughts should turn at this point to the vineyard in which Solomon's wealth and her brothers' care as guardians were both exhibited.

at Baal-hamon] Oettli, following Rosenmüller, thinks this place is identical with Belamon or Balamon in Judith viii. 3, which, he says, was not far from Shunem, Dothan, and the plain of Esdraelon. If the keepers are the Shulammite's brothers, Baal-hamon would naturally be in the neighbourhood of Shunem.

he let out] This is simply *he gave*, without any indication that it was rented; he gave it in charge to keepers.

every one...was to bring] Better, as Budde excellently translates it, *anyone would gain* 1000 *shekels by its fruits*, i.e. anyone who might sell the fruit would get 1000 shekels for it. Is. vii. 23 is not parallel, since the price there mentioned is not the value of the produce as here, but the price of the vineyard, which would be sold for as many silver shekels as there were vines.

12. *My vineyard, which* is *mine*] This is an emphatic expression for *my* vineyard, in contrast to Solomon's, and also as being her own exclusive possession.

is *before me*] is still in my possession, neither given away nor sold (Oettli), and is sufficiently guarded by me.

thou, O Solomon, must have *a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred*] More literally, *the thousand be to thee, O Solomon, and two hundred to those keeping* (or *watching*) *the fruit.* The meaning seems to be, 'O Solomon, you may keep the income of your vineyard, and the keepers may have their reward for their guardianship, but my vineyard is beyond your reach, and I have no need that my brothers or any others should guard it.

13. Here the bridegroom calls upon the Shulammite to let his companions, i.e. his friends who have come to congratulate him on his bride's safe return, hear her voice.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
The companions hearken to thy voice:
Cause me to hear *it*.

14 Make haste, my beloved,
And be thou like to a roe or to a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens] She must be supposed to have gone into the garden. That was her chosen spot formerly, and it has become so again. Grätz would read, and probably rightly, instead of *chabērīm*, *chabērai*='my companions.' The absence of the article is anomalous with the former, while the *m* might easily arise from a doubling of the initial *m* of the next word.

hearken to thy voice] Rather, as R.V., for *thy voice*.

14. She sings this verse in answer to this demand.

Make haste] This should be **flee**. Oettli thinks this implies that as the bridegroom thought her voice lovely, and asked her to exhibit it to his friends, so she also desired him to shew his elastic gait. But probably the object of the verse is to end the poem with a repetition of the bride's answer in ii. 17, when he formerly asked her to let him hear her voice. When he calls upon her to let his companions hear her voice, she sings the request she had formerly made to him in similar circumstances.

APPENDIX I.

1 THE SONG OF SONGS WHICH IS SOLOMON'S.

I.

IN THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD. CHAP. I. 2—8.

The daughters of Jerusalem addressing or speaking of Solomon.

2 "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
For thy caresses are better than wine.
3 Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance;
Thy name is as ointment poured forth;
Therefore do the maidens love thee."

The Shulammite muses, mentally addressing her absent lover. Daughters of Jerusalem addressing Solomon.

4 Draw me after thee, that we may run;
The king hath brought me into his chambers.
"We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will celebrate thy caresses more than wine:
Rightly do they love thee."

The Shulammite speaks.

5 I am swart but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
6 Look not (curiously) at me because I am swarthy,
Because the sun hath scorched me.
My mother's sons were angry with me,
They made me keeper of the vineyards;
But mine own vineyard have I not kept.

She muses, addressing her absent lover.

7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou wilt feed thy flocks,
Where thou wilt make them rest at noon;
For why should I be as one blindfold by the flocks of thy companions?

The daughters of Jerusalem.

8 "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
Go thy way forth in the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents."

II.

A KING'S LOVE DESPISED. CHAP. I. 9—II. 7.

Solomon speaks.

9 "I have compared thee, O my friend,
To my steed in Pharaoh's chariots.

10 How comely are thy cheeks in their beads,
Thy neck with strings of jewels!
11 Strings of golden beads shall we make thee,
With points of silver."

The Shulammite speaks.

12 So long as the king sat on his divan,
My spikenard gave forth its perfume.
13 My love is to me a bundle of myrrh,
That lieth all night between my breasts.
14 My love is to me a cluster of henna flowers
In the vineyards of Engedi.

Solomon.

15 "Behold thou art fair, my friend, behold thou art fair,
Thine eyes are dovelike."

The Shulammite to her absent lover.

16 Behold thou art fair, my love, yea, pleasant:
Yea, our couch is green.
17 The beams of our house are cedars,
And our rafters cypresses.

II. 1 I am a crocus of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

Solomon.

2 "As a lily among thorns, so is my friend among the daughters."

The Shulammite.

3 As an apple-tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my love among the sons.
In his shade I sat down with delight,
And his fruit was sweet unto my taste.
4 He brought me into the house of wine,
And his banner over me was love.
5 Stay me with raisin cakes, comfort me with apples,
For I am sick of love.
6 O that his left hand were under my head,
And his right hand were embracing me!
7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles and by the harts of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

III.

The Beloved comes. Chap. II. 8—17.

The Shulammite.

8 Hark! my beloved! Behold he cometh
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a gazelle, or a young hart :
Behold he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh in at the windows,
Glanceth through the lattices.
10 My beloved speaketh and saith to me,
'Rise up, my friend, my fair one, and come away.
11 'For lo, the winter is over, the rain is past and gone;
12 'The flowers appear on the earth,
'The time for pruning the vines is come,
'And the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.
13 'The fig-tree ripeneth her winter figs,
'And the vines are in bloom,
'They give forth their fragrance.
'Rise up, my friend, my fair one, and come away.
14 'O my dove, in the hiding-places of the crag,
'In the covert of the steep,
'Let me see thy form, let me hear thy voice,
'For thy voice is sweet, and thy form is comely.'

She sings.

15 Take us the foxes,
The little foxes
That spoil the vineyards;
For our vineyards are in bloom.

She speaks.

16 My beloved is mine and I am his,
He feedeth his flock among the lilies.
17 Until the day cool and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a gazelle
Or a young hart upon the cleft-riven mountains.

IV.

A Dream. Chap. III. 1—5.

The Shulammite.

1 Of a night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth,
I sought him, but I found him not.
2 I said, 'Come let me arise and go about in the city, in the streets and the open spaces
Let me seek him whom my soul loveth.'

I sought him, but I found him not.
3 The watchmen that go about the city found me:
'Him whom my soul loveth have ye seen?'
4 Hardly had I gone from them when I found him whom my soul loveth:
I laid hold on him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to my mother's house,
And to the chamber of her that bare me.
5 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles and by the harts of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

V.

The Return of the King. Chap. III. 6—11.

The Shulammite.

6 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Incensed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant?

Bystanders.

7 "Behold it is Solomon's litter;
Threescore heroes are about it,
Of the heroes of Israel,
8 All of them grasping swords,
Trained to war;
Each with his sword on his thigh,
For fear of night alarms.
9 A litter did King Solomon make for himself
Of the woods of Lebanon.
10 Its pillars he made of silver,
Its back of gold,
Its seat upholstered with purple,
The body of it wrought with mosaic, a love gift from the daughters of Jerusalem.
11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and look on King Solomon,
Wearing a crown wherewith his mother crowned him
On the day of his espousals, even the day of the gladness of his heart."

VI.

The Royal Suitor. Chap. IV. 1—7.

Solomon addressing the Shulammite.

1 "Behold thou art fair, my friend, behold thou art fair,
Thine eyes are (like) doves behind thy veil.
Thy hair is like a flock of goats,
Crouching on the slopes of Mount Gilead.
2 Thy teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep,
Which are come up from the washing,
Whereof every one bears twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth is comely.
Thy cheeks are like a rift of a pomegranate
Behind thy veil.
4 Thy neck is like the tower of David
Builded for trophies;
The thousand shields hang upon it,
All the shields of the heroes.
5 Thy two breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle, pasturing among the lilies.
6 Until the day cool, and the shadows flee away,
I will betake me to the mountain of myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.
7 Thou art all fair, my friend,
And there is no blemish in thee."

VII.

The true Lover's Pleading. Chap. IV. 8—V. 1.

The Shepherd lover speaks.

8 "With *me* from Lebanon, O bride,
With *me* from Lebanon, do thou come.
Come down from the height of Amana,
From the height of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens, from the mountains of leopards.
9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister-bride,
Thou hast ravished my heart with one (glance) of thine eyes,
With one chain of thy necklace.

10 How lovely are thy caresses, my sister-bride!
How much better than wine thy caresses!
And the smell of thy ointments than any perfumes.
11 Thy lips, O bride, drop virgin honey;
Honey and milk are under thy tongue,
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride,
A streamlet enclosed, a sealed spring.
13 Thy shoots are a pomegranate paradise,
With precious fruits, henna with spikenard,
14 Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
With all the incense woods,
Myrrh and aloes with all the chief spices.
15 Thou art the fountain of my garden,
A well of living waters, and rushing Lebanon streams."

The Shulammite speaks. 16 Awake, O North Wind, and come, thou South,
Blow upon my garden, that the perfumes of my garden may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.

The Shepherd lover speaks. V. 1 "I come into my garden, my sister-bride,
I pluck my myrrh with my balsam,
I eat my honeycomb with my honey,
I drink my wine with my milk;
Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

VIII.

A Dream. Chap. V. 2—VI. 3.

The Shulammite speaks. 2 I was sleeping but my heart was awake,
Hark! my beloved is knocking.
'Open to me, my sister, my friend, my dove, my perfect one,
'For my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.'
3 I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
And my heart was moved for him.
5 I arose to open to my beloved,
While my hands dropped myrrh, and my fingers the finest myrrh,
Upon the handles of the bolt.
6 I opened to my beloved;
But my beloved had turned away and passed on.
My soul had failed when he spake;
I sought him, but I found him not;
I called him, and he answered me not.
7 The watchmen that go about the city found me,
They smote me, they wounded me;
The watchmen of the walls
Took my veil from off me.
8 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalém,
If ye find my beloved, what shall ye tell him?
That I am sick of love.

The daughters of Jerusalem speak.

9 "What kind of a beloved is thy beloved, O fairest among women?
What kind of a beloved is thy beloved, that thou adjurest us so?"

The Shulammite speaks.

10 My beloved is white and ruddy, distinguished above ten thousand.
11 His head is most fine gold,
His locks are wavy, raven black:
12 His eyes are like doves by the water brooks,
Bathing in milk, sitting upon full streams:
13 His cheeks are as beds of balsam, producing perfumes,
His lips like lilies, dropping the finest myrrh:
14 His hands are cylinders of gold, set with topaz,
His body is a piece of ivory work encrusted with sapphires:
15 His legs are pillars of alabaster,
Set upon bases of fine gold;
His aspect is like Lebanon,
Goodly as the cedars:
16 His mouth is full of sweet words;
All of him is delightful.
This is my beloved, and *this* is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

The daughters of Jerusalem speak.

VI. 1 "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned him, that we may seek him with thee?"

The Shulammite speaks.

2 My beloved is gone down into his garden,
To the beds of balsam,
To feed his flock among the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,
Who feeds his flock among the lilies.

IX.

THE KING FASCINATED. CHAP. VI. 4—13.

Solomon speaks.

4 "Thou art beautiful, my friend, as Tirzah,
Pleasant as Jerusalem, terrible as bannered hosts.
5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have made me afraid.
Thy hair is like a flock of goats,
Crouching on the slopes of Gilead:
6 Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes,
Which are come up from the washing,
Whereof every one bears twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
7 Thy cheeks are like the rift of a pomegranate,
Behind thy veil.
8 There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines,
And damsels without number.
9 My dove, my perfect one, is but one;
She is the only one of her mother:
She is the darling of her that bare her.
Daughters saw her and called her happy,
Queens and concubines, and they praised her, saying,
10 'Who is this who looketh forth as the dawn,
Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
Terrible as bannered hosts?'"

The Shulammite speaks recalling the events of the fatal day.

11 I had gone down into the walnut garden,
To look at the fresh green plants of the valley,

To see if the vine had budded, and the pomegranates were in flower.
12 Or ever I was aware, my quest brought me
Among the chariots of my princely people.

She repeats the call of the Court ladies and her answer.

13 They said, [1] 'Return, return, O Shulammite;
Return, return that we may look upon thee.'
'Why would ye gaze at the Shulammite?
'As upon the dance of Mahanaim?'

[1] Ch. vii. 1 in Heb.

X.

The Praises of the Hareem. Chap. VII. 1—6. (Heb., vii. 2—7.)

The Women of the Hareem speak as they are dressing the Shulammite.

1 "How beautiful are thy steps in sandals, O noble lady!
Thy rounded thighs are like jewels,
Work of an artist's hands.
2 Thy body is a rounded goblet,
Let it not want mixed wine:
Thy belly is like a heap of wheat,
Fenced round with lilies.
3 Thy two breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle;
4 Thy neck is like a tower of ivory:
Thine eyes are like the pools in Heshbon
By the Bath-rabbim gate.
Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon
Looking towards Damascus.
5 Thy head upon thee is like Carmel,
And the tresses of thy head like purple;
A king is held captive in the locks thereof.
6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O Love,
Among the delights."

XI.

The King and the Shepherdess. Chap. VII. 7—VIII. 4. (Heb., vii. 8—viii. 4.)

Solomon speaks.

7 "This form of thine is like a palm-tree,
And thy breasts like date-clusters.
8 I am minded to climb up the palm-tree,
To take hold of its branches·

Let thy breasts be like clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy breath like apples;
9 And thy mouth like the best wine..."

The Shulammite interrupting speaks of her lover.

...that goeth down smoothly for my beloved,
Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.

Turning away from Solomon.

10 I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me.

To her lover.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field,
Let us lodge among the henna flowers.
12 Let us go early to the vineyards,
Let us see if the vine hath budded,
And its blossoms be open,
If the pomegranates be in flower:
There will I give thee my caresses.
13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
And over our doors are all manner of precious fruits,
New and old, which I have laid up, my beloved, for thee.

VIII. 1 O that thou wert my brother,
That sucked the breasts of my mother,
So that should I find thee without, I might kiss thee,
And yet none would despise me.
2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house,
Into the chamber of her that bare me:
I would give thee to drink of spiced wine,
Of my new pomegranate wine.
3 His left hand would be under my head,
And his right hand would embrace me.
4 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Why should ye stir up, or awaken love,
Until it please?

XII.

Return in the Might of Love.

Chap. VIII. 5—7.

Villagers speak.

5 "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?"

The Shepherd lover speaks.

"I awakened thee under yon apple-tree;
Yonder thy mother was in travail with thee,
There was she in travail that brought thee forth."

The Shulammite speaks.

6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For strong as death is love,
Cruel as Sheol is jealousy;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
Its flames are flames of Yah.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can rivers drown it:
If a man should give all the substance of his house for love,
He would be utterly despised.

XIII.

Reminiscences and Triumphs.

Chap. VIII. 8—14.

The Shulammite recalls and repeats a speech formerly made by her brothers.

8 'We have a little sister,
'And she has no breasts:
'What shall we do for our sister,
'In the day that she shall be spoken for?
9 'If she be a wall,
'We will build upon her battlements of silver:
'And if she be a door,
'We will make her secure with boards of cedar.'

She speaks in her own person.

10 I have been a wall,
And my breasts like towers:
Then was I in his eyes
As one that findeth peace.
11 Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-hamon;
He gave the vineyard to keepers:
Anyone would get for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver.
12 *My* vineyard is under my own oversight:
The thousand be to thee, O Solomon,
And two hundred to those watching its fruit.

The Shepherd lover speaks.

13 "Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
My companions are listening for thy voice:
Let me hear it."

The Shulammite sings.

14 Flee, my beloved, and be like a gazelle
Or a young hart upon the balsam slopes.

APPENDIX II.

Budde's Hypothesis regarding the Song of Solomon.

§ 1. *Introductory.*

As has been mentioned in the Introduction, pp. xii ff., Budde, taking up and making more precise a suggestion of Wetzstein's in his Essay on the *Syrian Threshing-Board*, which appeared in Bastian's *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* for 1873, looks upon the Song of Solomon as a collection of wedding songs, each independent of the other. As stated by Budde, who shews boundless ingenuity in meeting objections and in giving his opinion verisimilitude, this theory has been very widely accepted, and may almost be said to hold the field at present. Nevertheless, it is open to very serious objections, and leads to a very mistaken exegesis of the book. I have ventured consequently to set down here in an appendix what appear to be the main difficulties in the way of accepting this, in some respects, attractive solution of the many problems raised by this very singular poem.

§ 2. *Statement of Wetzstein's discoveries.*

In order that the matter may be dealt with satisfactorily, it will be necessary to give an outline of that portion of Wetzstein's essay upon which the theory is founded. In it he claims that the country population of the trans-Jordanic and trans-Lebanon regions retain a distinctly antique impress in speech and manners, in domestic life and in their practice of agriculture, and he holds that in all these respects they retain immemorial customs. Now among these people he found very peculiar marriage customs, in which the threshing-board, as the only easily procurable platform where wood is so scarce, plays a great part. Passing by the marriage-day itself with its processions, the sword dance of the bride, and the great festal meal, he goes on to say, "The best time in the life of the Syrian peasant is the first seven days after his marriage, during which he and his young wife play the part of king (malik) and queen (malika) and are served as such, both by their own village and by the neighbouring communities which have been invited. On the morning after the marriage, the bridegroom and bride awake as king and queen, and adorned as on the former day, receive before sunrise the *Shebin*, the 'best man,' called from this time onwards the *Vizier*, who brings them a slight morning meal. Soon afterwards, the bridesmen, or as they are also and more correctly called, the *youths of the bridegroom*, also come into the bridal house. If they learn that the Vizier has been graciously received, they betake themselves to the *metben*, the barn for straw, to bring forth the threshing-board. So soon as the bearers have this upon their shoulders, the

whole band, forming a chorus, strike up a sounding triumphal song, and march, surrounded of course by the shouting village children and by the stranger guests, to the threshing-floor. These songs are just the same as those which the peasants sing to the accompaniment of musket firing, when they have beaten off an attack of the nomads and are returning from the pursuit. They sing especially in the neighbourhood of the villages, in order that they may be invited and entertained as guests. The subjects of the songs at a marriage are war or love, mostly both. They have their origin for the most part among the southern nomadic tribes, especially the Shararat and the Shemmar; for dignified language, artistic verse and fine thoughts are to be found, according to the traditional belief of the Syrian inhabitants of towns and villages, only among the tent Arabs. Arrived at the threshing-floor, they erect from the most varied materials a platform fully two yards high. On the top of this the threshing-board is laid, and over it a large variegated carpet is spread. A couple of gold-embroidered cushions complete the whole. This is the Mertaba, the seat of honour for the king and queen, who are now solemnly brought out and enthroned. As soon as this is done the festal court called the *Diwân* is formed. It consists of the Judge, an Interpreter, and several bailiffs or myrmidons. The Interpreter is usually a well-known wit. The Judge then receives a staff in his hand, as he is also the executant of his judgements. Thereupon the accuser steps forward, and narrates in a long discourse that the king with his host had, as all knew, undertaken a campaign against a fortress which had hitherto been impregnable and defiant of all the world, with the object of conquering it; and since he was now back again and in their presence, he ought to let his people know whether the assault succeeded or not. Called upon by the Judge to speak according to the custom of the country, the king announces that he is a victor." Hereupon there follows the ceremony referred to in Deut. xxii. 13—21. If the king does not make this declaration, the Judge gives the order, and "he is dragged from his throne, stretched on the ground, held down, and beaten by the Judge, till the queen intercedes for him...After this scene a grand dance is begun in honour of the young pair. The song which is sung to accompany it deals only with them, and the inevitable *wasf*, i.e. a description of the bodily perfections of both, and of their ornaments, forms its main content. That in praising the queen the singers are more reticent, and praise rather her visible than her veiled charms, arises from the fact that she is to-day a wife, and that the *wasf* which was sung to her on the previous day during her sword dance had left nothing further to say. The *wasf* is to our taste the weakest part of the Syrian wedding songs. We feel its comparisons to be clumsy and we see everywhere marks of a stereotyped form....With this dance begin entertainments which last for seven days, beginning on the first day in the morning, on the other days shortly before mid-day; and they are continued, by the light of fires kindled for the purpose, far into the night. On the last day only, everything ends before sunset. During this whole week, their majesties, the bride and bridegroom, wear their marriage garments and ornaments,

are not permitted to work at all or to care for anything, and have only to look on from the Mertaba at the scenes enacted before them, in which they themselves take only a moderate part. The bride, however, performs a dance now and then to give opportunity for admiration of her ornaments. At meals they occupy the place of honour.... From time to time the games are varied by dances. Of these there are various kinds, which however may be brought under the two general heads of *sahqa* and *debqa*. The first might be called the graceful or single dance, since in it the dancers do not touch each other. To it belongs also the sword dance of which the *ZDMG.* of 1868, p. 106, gives an account. The *debqa* is as the name shews a loop dance, so called because the dancers hook themselves together by their little fingers. To hold one another by the hand would give occasion to hand pressings, which must be avoided, because no Arab woman would quietly submit to them from a strange man. For the most part the *debqa* appears as a circular dance. If it is danced by persons of both sexes, it is called the mixed *debqa*. While the *sahqa* is said to be of Bedouin origin, the *debqa* lays claim to be the true national dance of the Syrian *Hadari* or settled village dwellers. That may probably be so, for the nomad has not the *debqa*, and moreover the songs to which it is danced are composed, not in the nomad idiom, as is the case with the *sahqa*, but exclusively in the language of the *Hadari*. Further, the kinds of poetry are different. The song for the *sahqa* is always a *qasīde*, for the *debqa* an ode in four-lined strophes. All the *debqa* texts which I possess have the metre of the so-called Andalusian ode. It is also a peculiarity of the *debqa* that the strophes hang one on the other like the links of a chain, or like the fingers of the dancers, in so far as the second strophe begins with the words with which the preceding one ends. In this way, the mixing up of the strophes, or the leaving of them out is prevented. For *sahqa* and *debqa* a solo singer is employed. As soon as he has sung a verse or a strophe, as the case may be, the chorus, made up of the dancers and spectators, chimes in with the refrain, which in the *debqa* always consists of the two last lines of the first strophe of the poem. For the sake of the junction, consequently, every fourth line of the strophe must have the rhyme of the refrain."

§ 3. *The disorder of the Songs here, and how it is to be accounted for.*

Now the suggestion made by Wetzstein and elaborated by Budde, is that in the Song of Solomon we have a collection of the songs sung at such weddings. But if so, the songs are in strange disorder, and that has to be accounted for. As the extracts from Wetzstein's Essay shew, the sword dance of the bride occurs on the day of the wedding, but Budde finds it only in ch. vii, and there are other marks of utter disorder, as well as fragments which, as they stand, have no connexion with each other. To account for this he produces an instance of something similar from mediaeval Germany. In the 14th century there was a brotherhood called the Flagellants, who went all over Europe, scourging themselves because of their sins and singing hymns of praise and penitence. A collection of these hymns has come down to us, and it

is found that the writer of the collection, formerly a member of the brotherhood, has set down as one continuous poem what he could remember of their songs. "He has written them in the order in which they occurred to him. Sometimes he remembers the beginning of a song but cannot conclude it. But that does not disturb him. He flows on with what he does remember, and when the rest of it occurs to him he writes it down calmly at the place where he happens to be in his MS." This, Budde thinks, is an analogy to what we have here. The songs have been written down, he thinks, in this careless way. The undeniable likeness in style and vocabulary which is recognisable throughout the Song of Songs he accounts for by saying that the songs must have been collected at one time and one place. He then continues:—"In that case there are two main possibilities. Either (1) a wedding singer who could write, felt the impulse, perhaps when he was an old man, to write down all the songs of this sort he had in his *répertoire*, or perhaps a selection of his best songs. In that case they would not necessarily all come from one and the same marriage. Or (2) a spectator found so much pleasure in that which the wedding poet served up in a certain king's week, that he wrote down the songs from memory, or from the lips of one who knew them. Then we should rather have to think of a particular marriage, which of itself is likely enough." *Das Hohelied* von D. Karl Budde, p. xx.

§ 4. *The Unity of the Book, how is it to be accounted for on this hypothesis?*

But Budde sees that the unity and, to say the least of it, semi-dramatic character of the book is still somewhat inadequately accounted for, and he has to exercise his perfectly unbounded ingenuity still further. "We have to remember," he says, "*Habent sua fata libelli.* We have not here to do with the first transcription, as in the Flagellant songs, and probably also in the Egyptian collections of love-songs published by Maspéro and Spiegelberg, but with a writing which has been copied unnumbered times, and which assuredly has undergone editing more than once before it was received into the Canon, like all the other books of the Old Testament. The songs may quite well have been transposed and rearranged according to some guiding principle or principles, and equally well, trouble may have been taken to insert here and there transitions and connecting links, to bring some life and movement into the monotony of the same ideas. Such editorial activity may be seen especially where the matter appears to be borrowed from various other passages of the book, and necessarily where clear misunderstanding of the meaning of the poet comes in." Verses like ii. 9 *a* (which Budde says is copied from *v.* 17 of the same chapter), iv. 8 (which he declares to be the insertion of an editor, since it has no connexion with what follows), and viii. 14, are the most probable examples.

§ 5. *General Objections.*

Now it cannot be denied that this chain of hypotheses, for it is nothing more, brings out and tries to meet many of the difficulties of

the view that this book is a collection of separate and independent songs. It recognises and explains, after a fashion, the unity of style and vocabulary, the recurrence of common phrases, the persistent appearance of the same persons throughout the book, and the constant presence of spring, since that is the favourite season for marriages. It further gives a conveniently broad margin for fragments which cannot be accounted for in their present setting, as understood by the author of the hypothesis. Lastly, it gives us a possible explanation of those curious descriptions of the persons of both bride and bridegroom which are so unpalatable to modern taste, by regarding them as wedding *wasfs* such as Wetzstein gives specimens of. But it may be doubted whether the theory will stand the test of criticism. It will be observed that Budde makes considerable demands upon our imagination. We are to suppose, (1) first of all, that the curious inconsequence of his Flagellant scribe was anticipated by this ancient wedding singer; then (2) that the songs in our book were perhaps written down after being heard at a particular wedding by a spectator, not by a wedding singer at all; and lastly, (3) that the collection was thereafter altered and transposed by an editor before it was received into the Canon. Now to each of these suppositions there are valid objections.

(1) Take the first of them. We see at once that though the carelessness of a scribe like the Flagellant would account for disorder of a certain kind, and to a certain degree, it could hardly produce such a disorder as has to be explained here. For, so far as we know, there was no ordered ceremonial behind the Flagellant songs. They sang them, apparently, just as we sing from our hymn-books, in any order, at the taste or caprice of the singer. But that was not the case with these wedding songs. They were sung at the various stages of the wedding ceremonial, and that being the case it would be very unlikely that the disorder in a collection of songs for weddings would be as complete as it easily might be in the case of mere recollections from a hymn-book. The natural thing for a professional singer at weddings to do when he was endeavouring to write out his *répertoire* from memory would be to take the ceremonial as a guide, and either to write out several sets of songs for the eight days in something like their proper order, beginning always with the *wasf* of the sword dance, or to write out all the songs suitable to the first day which he could remember, then all those suitable for the second, and so on to the eighth. It is hardly conceivable that with such a framework ready to his hand, on which to hang his memories, he should have discarded it entirely, and have gone to work in the haphazard and quite lawless way of the Flagellant scribe. But it is that latter kind of disorder which Budde's theory demands, and consequently there is a great preliminary difficulty in the way of its acceptance.

(2) Then as to the second supposition, a preliminary difficulty is that it is contradictory of the first, and Budde consequently is not free to keep open this alternative. If the songs in the Song of Solomon are simply a set used at a particular wedding, then the sameness of the persons and the particular references may be accounted for, but not the disorder in which the songs stand in the book. For a spectator,

writing them down in that case, would naturally write them in something like the order in which they were sung. If, on the contrary, they are the *répertoire* of a singer written down from memory, some measure of disorder would be accounted for, but not the sameness of the persons and the particular references. But Budde insists upon the maximum of disorder, and at the same time wishes to account for the manifest harmony of the tone. He consequently puts forward these two incompatible suppositions. As they are manifestly incompatible, one of them must be dropped, and as he only once or twice mentions the view, that the collection is written by a spectator of a particular wedding, while the latter view is the foundation of his treatment of the book, we shall discard the former.

(3) The difficulty about the last supposition is that it seems to carry Budde so far towards the dramatic view of the book as it now stands that he comes into the hostile camp. For if the songs of which the book is composed have been transposed and rearranged according to some guiding principle or other, and if trouble has been taken to insert transition passages and connecting links to bring some life and movement into it, what does that amount to but an admission that the Song of Solomon, as it lies before us now, is a connected dramatic or semi-dramatic work? That we are not exaggerating Budde's concessions is proved by his admission that a dramatic tinge appears of itself (*op. cit.* p. xix), and the still more important admission that such things may easily rise to true dramatic scenes. Further, at p. 26 of his commentary, where the section chs. v. 2—vi. 13 is dealt with, we read, "Our *wasf* distinguishes itself from that of the young wife in ch. iv. 1—7 in this, that it has a narrative, nay a dramatic introduction, in the course of which the description of the bridegroom becomes necessary." Now if all that be so, the dispute between the supporters of the separate song view and those of the dramatic view may be only a question of words. Prof. Budde does not tell us expressly when this editing with its transpositions and rearrangements, with its insertion of transition passages and connecting links took place, but he seems to indicate that he would put it before the reception of the book into the Canon, for he says, "We have to do with a work which certainly has undergone editing once or more than once, *before it was received into the Canon*." But if this be so, and if the book was read and understood as a unity with dramatic elements in it before it was received into the Canon, then it is in that form alone that we have to do with it now. It is only of its meaning when so transformed that we have to take account. Of course it would remain a very interesting question from a merely literary point of view, whether this whole, with a dramatic tinge, had been compounded of separate love poems[1], but it would lie

[1] How easily this might be done may be seen in the *Spectator* of Aug. 18th, 1900. There, three ballads from the Punjabi are translated. The first deals with prospective marriage, the second is a kind of baby song, the last treats of death. Nothing is said as to whether they are the work of one writer, nor whether they referred originally to one life, but it is obvious that simply by being ranged together as they are, they suggest three scenes in a woman's life, marriage, motherhood, death. If proper names and particular personal references were inserted in one or two lines, then they could be adapted to an individual story, and would become such

entirely beyond our sphere as interpreters of Scripture. It would not be as separate love poems that the book became Scripture, it would not be as such that it has entered into the life of the Church of the Old Testament, or of the Church of the New Testament. It would only be as a connected poetic unity that we should have to consider it, and that is a strong point in favour of the dramatic or at least of the semi-dramatic view. In fact, if Budde be right, the Song of Solomon has had a unity given to it designedly by one who wished to work the various odes of which the book is composed into a connected whole, and who did so, in part at least, by inserting dramatic scenes. Of course he says that this writer misunderstood the original songs. But there are two possibilities which such a judgement seems entirely to ignore. The first is that the last writer, the author of the Song as we have it, may have deliberately taken some of the songs he borrowed, if he did borrow, in a different sense from that of the original writer. The second is that the author of the Song may have known that the meaning he has put upon these poems is the right one, and that Professor Budde is wrong in his interpretation of them. It can hardly be doubted that the passages in question, even if they may be understood as Budde understands them, may also have the meaning which he repudiates. As the book stands, therefore, even Budde practically admits that it is a unity, that it has drama in it, and that it was understood as a connected whole when it was received into the Canon.

§ 6. *Objections from the character of the Songs.*

But there remain a number of very grave objections to the separate song view which must be dealt with more at length, and one of these arises from the number and character of the songs. The wedding festival lasts *ex hypothesi* for seven or eight days. Every day there are dances to which songs are sung. Budde finds twenty-three songs here, while Siegfried, who adopts Budde's main position, finds only ten. Now that would hardly be enough for one wedding, unless the same songs were repeated endlessly, which is not likely; much less could these songs represent the *répertoire* of a professional singer at weddings, such as Budde inclines to take this to be. Such a singer would be sure to have a number of full sets of songs for the seven days in his memory, and here there are not enough for one. Then as to the character of the songs. Here they are all peaceful, merely love-songs, mainly such as represent the pre-nuptial and post-nuptial love-making of the bride and bridegroom. But, according to Wetzstein, a number of the songs now in use are "just the same as those which the peasants sing to the accompaniment of musket firing, when they have beaten off an attack of the Nomads and are returning from the pursuit....The subjects of them are war and love, mostly both." Now there are no war songs here at all. Moreover, at a later period of the festival songs are sung in which both husband and wife are celebrated together, here there are

a whole as Budde admits the Song of Songs to be. On the other hand, if they are the work of the same writer and were intended to be scenes from one woman's life, they would form precisely just such a poem as we suppose the Song to be.

none such. How then can this be a collection of wedding songs for such a festival as Wetzstein speaks of?

§ 7. *Solomon and the Shulammite are dramatis personae.*

But further, if the hero and heroine are definite persons about whom a story is told, and if Solomon is introduced in the course of the poem, then obviously the whole ingenious fabric built by Budde falls to the ground. He himself admits this, and his great task is to prove that neither Solomon nor any definite woman is referred to. The husband and wife are, according to Budde, called king and queen, and he is named Solomon, as the typical king of Israel, while the name "Shulammite" is a way of indicating Abishag, of whom we read in 1 Kings i. 2, "So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And the damsel was very fair; and she cherished the king, and ministered unto him." She was the fairest woman that could be found, and so the bride is called the Shulammite, as a tribute to her beauty, just as the bridegroom is called Solomon as a tribute to his temporary dignity.

(1) In examining this theory we shall take the case of the Shulammite first. In order that the Shulammite should stand here as an equivalent for "the fairest among women," we need to suppose that Abishag became widely famous in Israel as the most beautiful woman who had ever been known. She would need to have attained a position in story and song like that which Helen of Troy attained among the Greeks. But where is there a trace of anything of the sort? There are many historical books, many songs and prophecies in the Old Testament written long after her time, and we come upon no further trace of her. If she ever attained to such idealisation as to stand for the most beautiful woman in the world we know nothing of it, and without some indication of it we have no right to assume it. But even if we had proof that she had been so idealised, it still would seem very peculiar, that the bride at a marriage, when it was intended to flatter her beauty, should be called not "Abishag" but simply "the Shulammite." If the husband is called "Solomon" and not "the Jerusalemite," why should not the wife also be called the proper name of her prototype? That she should, even in the circumstances imagined, be called the Shulammite is as unlikely as that a Greek maiden, under similar circumstances, should be called not "Helen," but "the Argive," or that an English beauty, instead of being called a "Rosamond," should be called "the Berkshire lady." In his article in the *New World*, 1894, p. 64, Budde adduces several parallels as he considers them. "Who would be surprised," he says, "if in a song, a poetess of our time were addressed as 'Thou Sappho,' or as here, to avoid proper names of individuals, a preeminent mother as 'Thou mother of the Gracchi,' or to put the case exactly, if an inspired and courageous deliverer of her country or her city were called 'Thou Maid of Orleans'? All this is far easier in Oriental speech than with us. 'The Shulammite' is more than justified by it." But surely he must see that in these cases, except the first (which is on our side as a proper name is used), the title that is

substituted for the proper name is one that belongs to the one person only, and moreover indicates the very point in which the person indicated is unique. But such a name as the Shulammite belongs to many people and indicates no characteristic, consequently it would be utterly unfit for the purpose suggested. The only explanation of the use of this title for the heroine here is, that she was a historical or legendary native of Shulam, about whom and Solomon some well-known tale was current. Budde scornfully suggests that perhaps a marriage between Solomon and Abishag might be the origin of the tale, and certainly that would be a probable and likely solution of the difficulty compared with his. We are not however bound to that supposition. Evidently a love tale about some beautiful girl of Shulam is referred to, and since as Budde himself says, "historical persons demand an action, a development," being unsound here his whole scheme disappears.

(2) And now let us look at the case against Solomon. Budde says he does not appear even as a dumb figure. Martineau reduces him to that, but Budde makes him to be merely a type of certain qualities as in Matt. vi. 29 and xii. 42. Of course this would be impossible were it not that he takes 'king' wherever it occurs without Solomon, as meaning simply the bridegroom, because bridegroom and bride are called 'king' and 'queen' during the seven days of the wedding festival among the trans-Jordanic peasants. But the name Solomon occurs in three passages, and as Budde thinks, it should be inserted in a fourth. In i. 5, "as the curtains of Solomon"; in the passage iii. 7—11, "Behold it is the litter of Solomon"..."King Solomon made himself a palanquin"..."Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon"; and viii. 11 f., "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon, he let out the vineyard unto keepers"... "My vineyard, my own lies before me, the thousand pieces to thee, O Solomon, and two hundred to those who gather its fruits." In vi. 8, also, Budde would insert the name of Solomon, reading instead of "there are threescore queens," "Solomon had threescore queens."

Now with the first of these passages there is no difficulty. In such a phrase as "like the curtains of Solomon," there is nothing more than such an allusion as we find in the New Testament, and the case would be similar with the passage vi. 8, were it not that the queens and concubines referred to there are said to have praised the Shulammite. But it is otherwise with iii. 7—11 and viii. 11 f.

Let us take the latter first. Budde paraphrases it thus (*New World*, March, 1894, p. 60), "I do not envy thee thy precious vineyard, mine is dearer to me, and I do not need a keeper for it," putting the verses into the mouth of the bridegroom. And he asks, "Is there anything different from what is said in Matt. xii. 42, 'A greater than Solomon is here,' and does Solomon need to be present, does he need to be still alive, for one to make use of him in this manner?" To both these questions we think the answer must be "Yes," for there certainly appears to be something very different here from what we find there, something that would demand that Solomon should still be alive. For in the passage in St Matthew there is a reference to a definite event in

Solomon's history as narrated in the Scriptures, which had a manifest bearing upon the discussion in which Jesus was engaged. But here, anyone's vineyard let out to keepers would have answered the purpose, if Budde's view were correct. There is no story known about any special vineyards possessed by Solomon at Baal-hamon or anywhere else, and if the Song were written late, as Budde supposes, the reference cannot be due to the speaker having lived in the neighbourhood of a vineyard of Solomon's. Moreover on his hypothesis the sharp contrast in *v.* 12, "You keep yours" and "I will keep mine," loses all significance. Whereas, if Solomon had attempted to win the maiden and had failed, the whole situation is at once illuminated. The reference to his vineyards becomes clear and natural, and the scorn of Solomon with his wealth is an appropriate application of the fine sentiment of verse 7 *b*, "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love he would utterly be contemned"; see commentary *in loc.*

And if it seems impossible to get rid of Solomon in viii. 11 f. it will, we think, seem equally so to drive him out of iii. 7—11. Budde regards this as a description of the bringing out of the bridegroom-king to seat him on his throne on the day after the wedding, or rather perhaps the bringing out of the throne, and then, after a pause during which the bridegroom-king has taken his place, in *v.* 11 the daughters of Zion are called upon to go forth and see him "in the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals." He is called Solomon here, says Budde, "because he was like him in splendour" (*New World*, p. 61), or as it is more vividly put in his Commentary, p. 16, "The use of it [the name of Solomon] is sufficiently explained as a hyperbole, as the highest power of the conception of 'king,' especially where festal arrangements are concerned. If they were going to play a king, they would of course play not King Tom or King Jack or whatever the bridegroom's name might be, but King Solomon straightway." That looks plausible, till we remember that the 'king' in these wedding festivals is greeted on the day after the wedding as a conquering king who has taken an impregnable fortress, and songs of love and *war* are sung to him. Now Solomon, a name which both in meaning and association implies peace, would be a singular name for a hero who had conquered in war. As a representative of kingly magnificence the bridegroom might have been called Solomon; but as a man of war any other name would have been better. But besides that, there are other difficulties. Budde himself is quite uncertain as to what exactly is to be said about these verses. In the *New World* he said, "The wedding procession is here plainly portrayed." In his Commentary he says that it is a procession on the day after the wedding. Whether it is that accompanying the throne for the bride and bridegroom, or that accompanying the bridegroom, he cannot decide, though he leans to the former. If, therefore, the passage is difficult for those who think the poem is a drama, as he says truly enough, let us not forget that it is difficult on Budde's supposition also. And it is difficult to a degree which must make his whole idea doubtful. His thought is that we have here the songs sung at peasant weddings, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, in the Greek period of Israel's history; and he supposes that in all

essentials the proceedings were the same as they are to-day among the peasants in the land beyond Jordan. Now according to that the 'throne' (but notably enough it is not called throne, *kursi*, but *martabe*, a seat covered with a carpet) is carried in procession from the chaff barn to the threshing-floor by the "youths of the bridegroom," and then the king and queen are led forth solemnly to take their seat upon it. But neither here nor elsewhere in the Song is there any hint of the *queen*. No queens save those of Solomon's hareem appear. That is inexplicable if Budde's theory is right, and in this particular passage it is more inexplicable than elsewhere. How could the queen be so utterly ignored when she first appears in public in the beginning of the great week of her life? And there is another difficulty. What meaning can the phrase "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness" (the *midhbār*) have? Putting aside the almost absurd incongruity of representing a peasant procession in a country village as "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense," &c., and calling the peasant lads surrounding it "threescore heroes of the heroes of Israel," what possibly can the *midhbār* mean in such a case? The word of course does not mean 'desert,' it means the open uncultivated pasture land. What possible meaning could there be in calling the space between the barn and the threshing-floor, especially when the barn is the starting-point, "coming up from the *midhbār*"? Budde feels this and quietly passes over the difficulty, saying, "We are of course not in a position to fix exactly what is here meant by the *midhbār*." No, on his hypothesis he could not possibly fix upon any meaning for the word; whereas it finds a natural and easy explanation in the theory he combats. Taking the whole passage as it stands, we should say that it cannot possibly refer to a rustic wedding. It would be pushing hyperbole till it became satire to use such figures concerning such a festival. Whereas if Solomon is in the book, and appears somehow in all his splendour, everything is natural and coherent.

But besides the absence of the 'queen,' and the presence of the 'king' alone at this point, which renders the analogy which Wetzstein and Budde draw between present-day wedding customs and this book very questionable, there is a still more formidable difficulty in taking Solomon to be a merely hyperbolical name for the bridegroom-king. Budde with his altogether admirable candour points it out himself. The difficulty is this, that while the bridegroom is on Budde's hypothesis called Solomon, yet in two striking passages of the Song he is distinguished from Solomon and contrasted with him, much to Solomon's disadvantage. The first is vi. 8, where we read, "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my undefiled, is but one." Manifestly a royal hareem is meant, and Budde would read, "Solomon has threescore queens, &c." Consequently we have here the Solomon of the wedding triumphing over the real Solomon, since his own love was so much more to him than a whole hareem of queens and concubines and hareem maidens. The second is viii. 11, where the bride scornfully leaves to Solomon his fine vineyard which produces so much money, and is proud to possess instead her own grace and beauty which outweighs all that, not only in

her lover's eyes but in those of all discerning men. Budde meets this as follows. "When in iii. 6 f. the bridegroom himself is called Solomon, while in these two songs vi. 8, 9 and viii. 11—13 he distinguishes himself from Solomon as poorer and yet richer, that only corresponds to the freedom which this playing at king permits. In the first passage, the object is to exalt this [the bridegroom's] external magnificence to the highest point, the two latter passages emphasise the inner superiority of his love-marriage by introducing the mention of its contrary." But surely that would be a very foolish expedient. That in the same series of wedding songs Solomon should in one place be taken for the most exalted kind of king and his name given to the bridegroom, while in others he should be set forth as an example of the poverty of riches by the Solomon of the moment, is not psychologically possible. The personification was not so slight as that. If it came in at all, the bridegroom-king *was* Solomon, not merely like him, and for him to make a mock of Solomon without any warning or explanation would have been as misleading to the hearers as it is to us.

§ 8. *The Bridegroom-king is meant to be a mere village Sheikh.*

But further, the idea of calling the bridegroom-king at a village wedding Solomon, and so identifying him with the most luxurious and magnificent of all Israelite kings, is one that would never have occurred to anyone, especially in Israel, of the Greek time. The bridegroom is called *malik* to-day, Wetzstein tells us, and the bride *malika*, but these titles do not necessarily mean 'king' and 'queen' in its full sense, probably Sultan and Sultana would be the modern equivalents for these latter. In Scripture a *melekh* is not necessarily a great potentate, for in Judges i. 5 ff. we are told that Adonibezek, the lord of a small town, had seventy 'kings' (*melākhīm*) crawling under his table. Moreover, throughout Persia and Afghanistan the petty chiefs, lords of a village or heads of a few tents, are called *maliks*, and that is evidently a usage learnt from their Arabic conquerors[1]. And in Bustani's *Muhit al Muhit*, *malik* is defined as one who holds sovereignty over "a people, a *tribe*, or lands." Nor is the fact that Wetzstein says the bridegroom has a *wazir* against this, for according to Bustani that word is used as an 'assistant.' Consequently the probability is that the husband is called *malik*, 'king,' because like a leader in war he has conquered, overcome the resistance of his wife, the impregnable citadel, not at all because of any special splendour. The thought in the minds of the people is that he is merely the leader of a successful expedition. Since that is so, the calling of the bridegroom in a Judean village in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem 'king Solomon' would be a thing without parallel, and we may almost say, absurd, especially when we take into account that this 'king' is in certain circumstances plucked from his lofty seat and soundly beaten with sticks in the midst of his feast according to Wetzstein.

[1] Cp. G. Oussani in *Johns Hopkins Semitic Papers*, p. 74, "The Nestorians in the mountains are governed by hereditary village sheikhs known as Maliks."

§ 9. *The Objections from the passages which refer to a historical or legendary background.*

We cannot think, therefore, that Solomon and the Shulammite are to be dismissed as mere names for the bridegroom and bride. They are meant to be, and can be successfully dealt with only as, the historic king, and some maiden of Shulam about whom there was a story in connexion with him. That this is so, is confirmed by the existence of casual hints as to particular events and circumstances, which are too varied and too personal to belong to mere popular wedding chants which were sung at weddings in general. They are even too individual to be references which might have been incorporated in the songs at one particular wedding. They are such as these:—"I am swart but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" (i. 5). That is hardly a subject for song at rural weddings in general, especially when the bride is posing as a queen; and who are "the daughters of Jerusalem"? Again, "My mother's sons were incensed against me. They made me keeper of the vineyards" (i. 6). "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?" (iii. 6). "With me from Lebanon, O bride, with me from Lebanon do thou come," &c. (iv. 8). "She is the only one of her mother" (vi. 9). "Or ever I was aware, my desire set me among the chariots of my princely people" (vi. 12). "Oh that thou wert my brother, I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother's house" (viii. 1 and 2). "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?" "Under yon apple tree I awakened thee. There thy mother was in travail with thee" (viii. 5). "We have a little sister and she hath no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?" &c. (viii. 8 ff.). All these are hints of a particular story which is the background of the poem or poems. It is in the effort to piece these together that the dramatic theory has arisen, and it is as giving a fairly natural explanation of these that it finds so many supporters. Now Budde's way of dealing with such passages is very instructive. They all are stumbling-blocks to him. And even his almost miraculous ingenuity is very hard put to it in making them accord with his theory. Sometimes he even has to come down to the crude expedient of lopping away what on his theory he cannot explain.

Of ch. i. 5 and 6 he says,—"this passage more than any other might seduce us into a dramatic view of the book, for here would really be the germ of the plot." But he resists the seduction by heading this song (*vv.* 5, 6) "Modest self-praise of the bride," and by supposing that it is sung when the bride first appears before the assembled guests in her bridal ornaments and is gazed at with curiosity. All the explanation he gives beyond that is contained in the words, "That such a song might be in place at many a wedding is plain." "The daughters of Jerusalem are the girls of the city as contrasted with the country girls," and "in actual life these daughters of Jerusalem are nothing else than the female wedding guests."

Of ch. i. 6 he says,—"the brothers here must serve as a foil to the

bridegroom as in viii. 11; the bride has to complain of their harshness, beyond doubt an extremely frequent phenomenon, and one which hurts not a little the vanity of the maiden proud of her conquests." But obviously that explanation is inadequate. As we have seen, the book cannot be a collection of wedding songs picked up at one wedding. The order of the songs departs too widely from the order of the wedding ceremonies for that. If on the other hand the book contains the *répertoire* of a singer, then we should have to suppose that there was a *class* of weddings to which such a song as this in ch. i. 5 and 6 would be applicable, i.e. according to Budde there must have been a *class* of weddings at which the bride was a country girl who had been harshly treated by her brothers, and at which the majority of the female guests were women from the city. Now, that could be only when the bridegroom belonged to the city, and brought his city relatives with him. But putting aside the objection that in that case the new household would be an urban and not a rural one, and that the pastoral character of all the songs would then be inappropriate, it may be asked whether even in these circumstances a song like this would be suitable or becoming? Surely it cannot have been the custom at such weddings to make the bride apologise for her sunburnt looks, and to parade her brothers' ill treatment of her before the town-bred ladies related to the bridegroom. Then as now, that would be insupportable to any bride. But if that view be rejected, there seems to be no alternative but to take the verses as referring to some particular incidents in an individual life.

We have already referred to ch. iii. 6 and the way in which the *midhbār* is dealt with; it is simply given up as unintelligible.

Ch. iv. 8 again he disposes of as the interpolation of an editor, because the verse stands quite out of connexion with the rest. "It has no more to do with the preceding *wasf* than with the succeeding panegyric of the charms of the bride. Even by itself it is unintelligible. The bride is to come with the bridegroom from Lebanon, and yet we have not heard that they ascended Lebanon or lived there." He accounts for its presence here thus. In *vv.* 11 and 15, Lebanon is used figuratively, and in *v.* 6*a* going to the mountains is spoken of; the probability is that the verse was inserted from a misunderstanding of the context, in the endeavour to bring some life, movement and action into the poem as a whole. But it would seem to be a sufficient reply to say that if the words of this verse be taken as the beginning of a new speech of the shepherd bridegroom, it naturally has nothing to do with the preceding *wasf*, and it introduces the succeeding panegyric very well in that case. To say that the verse in itself is unintelligible, because we have not been told that the bride had gone to Lebanon, is an assertion which nothing but dire necessity could make any lover of poetry believe for a moment. Such abrupt references to things not mentioned before are common in the poetry of all lands.

As to vi. 9, Budde doubts whether it fits into its place, and suggests that perhaps it should be omitted.

In dealing with ch. vi. 13 (vii. 1 in Heb. text) he says *vv.* 11—13 may have been originally an independent song which the author

employed to introduce the *wasf*, as other verses are employed in v. 2 ff., but they may quite as well have been composed for this place *to give dramatic life to the piece*. The bride, as is becoming, replies to the praises of her beauty with modest deprecation, saying that she does not in the least know how she came to such honour. A singing woman lends her words and voice. Whether that which she puts into the bride's mouth corresponds to reality or not, is a matter of complete indifference. All that is desired is that the words should reflect the becoming state of mind for a bride. That is to say, Budde, in order to get rid of the dramatic element in the Song, has to suppose that the perfectly clear statements of these verses have no meaning. At a certain point in the proceedings it was the rule that the bride should pose as not knowing how she came to the honour of being set on the wedding chariot. For Budde gathers from this verse that at the time and place where these songs were written down it was the custom to conduct the bride to the sword dance on the wedding-day in a chariot, though the chariot here is introduced as suddenly as 'Lebanon' in the passage previously discussed. Thereupon, the singing woman sings a song about someone who went down into a garden and was, before she was aware, lifted on to a wedding chariot. "Whether that which she puts into the bride's mouth corresponds to reality or not," says Budde, "is a matter of complete indifference." That is surely rather a desperate solution of the problem presented by these verses, and it is not wonderful that Budde himself is not satisfied. "*Sonstige Hilfe bleibt abzuwarten*," he says in conclusion. We do not see that on his theory anything else could be said.

Of viii. 1 and 2 he says: "It is seemly for the chaste maiden that she should be unable to imagine a greater happiness than a brotherly relation with her lover." But if all the songs deal with post-nuptial love, that cannot be the meaning. And even if some reference to pre-nuptial love were possible, such a reference as this could be introduced after a marriage only as a reflection on the childishness and ignorance of that love, which is hardly likely.

As to viii. 5 Budde is completely puzzled. He says: "Unfortunately the meaning of 5 *b* is very obscure, and in so far as it can be understood, it cannot be brought into any connexion with *vv.* 6 f. The question is, Is 5 *b* badly corrupted, is it a dramatising addition, or is the whole verse the unintelligible remains of an independent song?" and with that question he leaves it.

Ch. viii. 8—10 is called a specially fresh and lively song, the counterpart of ch. i. 5 f. in that it introduces the brothers again. There too they play a harsh *rôle*. The bride tells tales out of school, with mock tragic air playing the former part of the brothers in order to make fun of it. For she has grown up unawares, and before they thought of it, she was protected by her husband's love from their foolishly careful guardianship. Budde justifies this interpretation by the fact that in German popular songs the daughter often makes clear to her mother in still ruder ways, that she is no longer a child.

Now what must strike any reader is the extraordinary helplessness of these expedients, when one considers the fine scholarship and the great

ability of the man who is driven to adopt them. On the whole he does not know what to make of these passages, whereas those who take them as the salient points of the tale which the lyrics are meant to tell, and piece them together as in Introd. § 2, find that they mutually throw light upon each other.

§ 10. *The Marriage Customs described by Wetzstein are neither primitive nor universal.*

But besides its failure to account satisfactorily for the historic element in our book, Budde's theory is open to another objection. He assumes on Wetzstein's authority that the marriage customs described by the latter are ancient, and may therefore be supposed to have been universal Semitic customs which have prevailed all down the stream of history. But that assumption seems, according to Wetzstein himself, a very doubtful one. For in the notable passage of his essay quoted in § 2 of this Appendix, he shews that the wedding customs he describes are not homogeneous. There is a combination of elements, part belonging to the nomads and part to the settled population. He says that the *debqa* is the dance of the agriculturists, and the *sahqa* that of the nomadic people, and the songs, which accompany these dances respectively, differ in almost every respect. Nothing, consequently, can be clearer than that there has been here an amalgamation of customs, owing to the country being a border land, in which two very different peoples meet. That would imply, until the contrary is proved, that the wedding festival in the form described is purely local, and consequently may be of very recent origin. Budde indeed says in the *New World*, p. 70, "More than half of its contents, as we have seen, finds a place in the form *of every Palestinian wedding*," and in the Introduction to his Commentary, p. xix, "Accordingly we possess in the Song of Solomon *the text-book, as it were, of a Palestinian-Israelite wedding*"; but there is no authority for this in Wetzstein, and certainly it is not true of present customs to the West of Jordan—for, to mention one thing, there is no sword dance at weddings in that part of the country now. In any case the festival as now celebrated owes some of its most salient features to continued intercourse with the Nomadic Arabs. Now it may well be doubted if such a composite custom, perhaps purely local, and depending certainly on circumstances such as intercourse with the Bedouin Arabs, can *sans façon* be transferred to a remote period (the Grecian time Budde says), to the land West of the Jordan, and to a people who had no intercourse with Nomads. For when the pastoral life is referred to in the Song (as Budde himself points out), Gilead is brought in, in a somewhat vague way, as its special seat. The probabilities seem all against such a transference, and no one has made any attempt to shew that it is legitimate. The importance of this objection is seen in the fact that Budde's interpretation of one of the most difficult passages (vi. 13) turns upon the sword dance being part of the wedding festival. That, as we have noted above, is a part of the proceedings which is probably nomadic, and it does not exist to-day West of the Jordan. How then can

we safely take the customs described by Wetzstein as universal and primitive? They have all the appearance of a local growth due to special and peculiar environment.

§ 11. *Objections founded on the great panegyric on Love.*

Again, the gravest doubts are thrown upon Budde's hypothesis, because it completely fails to explain the great panegyric of true love in ch. viii. 6, 7. As it stands now in the last chapter, when the heroine is seen approaching her mother's house, leaning on her beloved, it has all the appearance of being meant to be the culmination of the book, the end to which all the rest is tending. On the hypothesis that we have in the book a collection of dramatic lyrics dealing with a single life it takes that place, and fitly celebrates the triumph of the faithful bride. But taken as a separate song, sung at weddings all over the country, it loses all importance in the first place; and it becomes very incongruous with its supposed surroundings in the second. According to Budde there is no such thing as pre-nuptial love in the East: "The more the bride and bridegroom are brought together in these countries without will or inclination, so that love of any kind must first arise after the wedding, the more likely is the development, naturally, of the desire to represent the marriage as a pure union of hearts, and the inclination as one that had long existed." This is his explanation of all those passages in the Song, and they are numerous, which describe the tender emotions of the bride before marriage. How unnatural it is, must be apparent; for if it was abhorrent to custom that young people should "love and use to meet"; if a girl's fair fame would be blasted if it were known that she had done this (*New World*, p. 59), then how could it be "natural" that at a wedding such things should be narrated? How could the wish arise to represent a union, which is openly a matter of bargain between the parents, as a union of hearts? The thing surely is impossible. But it is not our purpose now to enlarge on that aspect of the question; what we wish to point out is that instead of being appropriate to any Eastern wedding, so appropriate as to form a standing part of the marriage songs, this splendid exaltation of love, and contempt for those who would seek to buy it, would be entirely out of place. The marriage had been the subject of bargain. That was and is the custom, though pre-nuptial love is not so rare or so difficult among villagers in the East as Budde assumes. What could be more unfortunate than to mock at the very transaction at which they were assisting, what more immoral than to incite young people to seek for that which the "good custom" of their people sought to render impossible for them? In Benzinger's *Hebräische Archäologie*, p. 138, we read how a marriage is arranged at the present day among unsophisticated country folk and the Nomadic Arabs. "It is the task of the parents, especially of the father or his representative, to look out a bride for the son. When a suitable girl has been found, then the dealings with her family begin. The chief point is the fixing of the price, and of the outfit of the bride, which is not accomplished without the inevitable bargaining. The price goes as high as £100, but varies according to the beauty and skill, &c., of the girl. The greater part of this is kept by the father for himself; a

small part of it however is used to purchase her outfit, her garments, jewellery and house furnishings. The girl, whose consent is not asked, receives an ornament from the bridegroom as 'earnest money.' The marriage takes place only after the price has been paid; previous to that the bridegroom may not see the bride. The *fellah* girl sees in all this nothing to her disparagement, it is the regular custom, and custom is founded on what is right." Then he adds, "This description applies almost word for word to the old Hebrew customs." Now how could it be the custom at weddings arranged in this manner to sing "If a man should give the whole substance of his house for love, yet would he utterly be contemned"? Budde says that their burden is "the inexhaustible subject of popular poetry, so that Solomon does not need to be caught in the act to suggest it." But the question is whether it *could* be the "inexhaustible subject of popular poetry" in ancient Israel or among Orientals? We think not, unless indeed we were to see in it a pathetic plea of a wife so bought to her husband, that he might give her love as well as the position of his wife. But that would be too modern and too complicated an emotion for the simple East. It is much easier to take it as the historic background has suggested to us. So taken, then, this passage must be the culmination of the book, and that by which all the rest is to be judged, and only in some form of the dramatic theory can that be done.

§ 12. *The assumption that the Marriage has been consummated at the beginning of the Book.*

But Budde's strongest point against the dramatic view in any shape, and in favour of his own view, is that obviously and palpably there are throughout, in the first chapters as in the last, statements that can mean nothing else but that the marriage has been consummated. Always he maintains that it is married love which the poem celebrates. The general grounds on which he asserts this are denied in Benzinger, *Arch.* p. 140, where he shews that neither in ancient nor in modern times would Eastern customs *exclude* pre-nuptial love. Opportunities for the meeting of young people were not and are not wanting. But the strength of his position is in the exegesis of individual passages. If there were any where an undoubted statement that the bride had finally given herself to the bridegroom, that would make the dramatic view more difficult, and if it occurred in the first chapters, it would make it impossible. Now he finds such assertions in ch. i. 2—4, 12—17, and in ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16 f., and adds that though one or other of these passages may be understood otherwise, prejudice alone can fail to recognise that only the end of chs. iv to v. 1 and the close of ch. vii represent the consummation of the marriage as clearly as large sections of chs. i and ii do. It will be necessary therefore to examine each of these passages. The first (i. 2—4) may be put aside for the present, for it is only by extensive changes in the text that the meaning referred to can be got from it, and these again largely proceed from the assumption that the "king" of the book is the husband. In the second passage (i. 12—17) the same assumption comes in. The husband is the "king," and the words "While the king sat at his table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance"

are to be so interpreted as to make his table a metaphor for the bride herself, and the bridegroom's possession of her as his wife. As for the references in ch. ii, *vv.* 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, there is none that would even suggest what Budde finds in them, save *v.* 6. There, of course, an embrace is pictured, but there is nothing to make it necessary to suppose that a marital embrace should be referred to. The only other passage referred to in ch. ii is *v.* 16, and in the extraordinary exegesis of that verse which finds a reference to marriage in it, very few will we think follow Budde. We consequently must enrol ourselves among those dominated by prejudice according to him, for while in chs. i and ii there are highly coloured pictures of lovers meeting and parting, we can find none that necessarily bear the meaning Budde's view of the whole compels him to seek and to find. On the contrary, we feel the exegesis which explains these passages in this fashion to be contrary to good taste and extremely improbable besides. Look for example at vi. 1—3. Taken as they stand these verses depict a sweet and natural rustic scene.

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned him, that we may seek him with thee?
My beloved is gone down into his garden,
To the beds of balsam plants,
To feed his flock among the gardens,
And to pluck lilies.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,
Who feeds his flock among the lilies."

Budde formerly regarded this as an interpolation, but he now permits it to stand, but only on condition that the garden should mean the young wife, and that 'gardens' in the fifth line should be made singular. The balsam beds are to signify her cheeks, the lilies her mouth, the pasturing and plucking, the enjoyment of her love. And everywhere it is the same. The most innocent similes have to become sexual references, and from beginning to end the bride, who we must remember is any bride, is made to beat at the door of the marriage chamber in a most unbecoming manner, though she is also childlike enough to wish that her bridegroom had been her brother. With regard to v. 1, which many, e.g. Delitzsch, take to represent the marriage, it is certainly to be admitted that the words may bear the meaning thus put upon them. The perfects may be taken in the full perfect sense, and we may translate 'I have come into my garden,' &c. But then they may also be read as perfects of certainty='I shall certainly come'='I have as good as come.' Cp. Driver, *Introd.*[6] p. 441. Consequently that interpretation also is open, and the decision must depend upon our general view of the book. It can in no way be decided by an appeal to this passage. Nor does the latter part of ch. vii in any way strengthen the case. There is nothing there which must necessarily refer to the consummation of the marriage.

A general review of all these passages, therefore, leads rather to the belief that no marriage takes place or is regarded as consummated in the book. Perhaps two of them might be taken in that sense without

violence, others of them need to be travestied in strange fashion before they could be brought to bear it. But against their having that meaning is the passage in viii. 1, where the bride sighs for the possibility that her lover had been her brother. That, occurring after all these other passages, throws back the light of its innocence upon them, and bars any such interpretation as that which we are combating, i.e. of course if the poem is a connected whole. On the song-hypothesis no doubt that difficulty is not felt, but then others which seem quite as formidable immediately emerge. One of these, as has already been said, is the assumption of a most extraordinary and unaccountable disorder in the songs. Those who adopt the song-view have to admit, too, that after songs which in their view put the consummation of the marriage beyond question, there are many references to the first dawn of love before marriage, and exhibitions of the innocent fancies of the bride, which are all pure fictions, since, as Budde says, the whole matter was an arrangement between parents. All that seems very improbable, and some variety of the dramatic hypothesis would seem to fit the case much better.

§ 13. *The vivid personal feeling of the Songs.*

Finally, the question may well be asked whether in songs meant to be sung at weddings in general, weddings too brought about as they generally are in the East, there would be the consistent accent of personal feeling which we find throughout the Song. The specimens of that kind of song which Wetzstein gives do not possess this character. We can find in none of them the glow of personal affection which gives all its lyric power to the Song. The gratification of mere physical passion is what they dwell upon, and though that is more crudely expressed in the Song when the baser love is contrasted with that of the Shulammite and her lover than Western and Christian feeling could have wished, still, the rapture of a pure and personal affection is so undeniably present as to make it improbable that we have here merely a collection of popular wedding chants.

INDEX.

Abishag, 81 f.
Aglen, Archdeacon, 4, 6
Ain Jidy, 7
allegorical interpretation, xxxv ff., 13 f.
aloes, 32
Ămānā, 29
Ammi-nadib, 47
Amru ibn Kulthum, xvii, 25
Anemone coronaria, 9, 40
appiryōn, xxvi ff., 23
apple, 10
Aqiba, Rabbi, x
Aramaic words in the Song, xxv f., xxix ff., 22 f., 36
argāmān, 23, 51
Arnold, Sir Edward, xxxvi
Ashdod, the language of, xxix f.
ăsher = which, ix, xxiii, xxvi

Balsamodendron myrrha, 7
banner, 10 f.
Barada, 29
Barnes, Dr, 27
Benzinger quoted, 90
betel, 18
Boswellia serrata, 22
bride and bridegroom, performances in honour of, xiii, 74 ff.; called 'queen' and 'king,' *ibid.*
Browning quoted or referred to, xx ff., xxxii, 58
Budde, Prof., quoted or referred to, xxv, *passim*, and App. ii

calamus, 31 f.
camphire, 7, 31
Canon, conditions for admission of books into, xi
Canticles, see *Solomon, Song of*
Carmel, 50 f.
carnal-spirituality of Easterns, xxxviii
cedar, 8 f., 41, 60
Cervus dama, 12
Cheyne referred to, 11, 43
Chokhmah, xi
cinnamon, 32
Crocus sativus, 31
cypress, 8 f.

dances, xiii, 48, 74 ff., 89
daughters of Jerusalem, xxv f.
dĕbqa, 76, 89
Delitzsch quoted or referred to, x, &c., and notes *passim*
Derwish songs, xxxvii
dew, 35
dōdhīm, 2, 34
doves' eyes, 8, 25, 39
dramatic lyrics, xx, 59
drinking at feasts, 34
Driver quoted, xxv f., &c.

Ecclesiastes, x
ĕgōz, xxvii, 46
Egyptian chariots and horses, reference to, 5
Egyptian love-songs, 30
En-gedi, 7
Ewald referred to, xviii, and notes *passim*

figs, 15
fir, 8 f.
Fitzgerald referred to, xxxvi
Flagellants, 76 ff.
frankincense, 22, 32

Gazella dorcas, 12
Gilead, mount, 25 f.
Ginsburg quoted, 30, 39
Goethe quoted, xxxvii
grammatical inaccuracy, 36
Grätz referred to, xxi, &c.
Greek words in the Song, xxvii

Hafiz, xxxvii
hareem, description of a, 44
head-dress of Persian ladies, 6
heart regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of the intellect, 36
Heine, xii
henna, 7, 31
Hermon, 29
Heshbon, 50
hind, 12
honey, 30
horses, Eastern high esteem of, 5
Hosea, resemblances between certain parts of, and the Song, xxiv

ivory, 50

Jabneh, discussion at, regarding the Song, x
Jami, Persian poet, xxxv
Jayadaeva, xxxvi
Jelal-eddin Rumi, xxxvii
Jewish custom of crowning a bridegroom, 24
Jonson, Ben, quoted, 11
Josephus on Canon of O.T., x

Kedar, 3

lamedh auctoris, 1x
Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, xxxvii, 6, 25
Lawsonia inermis, 7
Leaf, Mr Walter, quoted, xxxvii f.
leopards in Palestine, 29
lily, 9, 40
lions in Palestine, 29
love=caresses, 2, 30
love=friend, 5, 14, 16, 25
love, panegyric on, xvi, xxxi f., 56, 90
Lovelace quoted, 51

Magnus, xii
Mahanaim, 48
malabathron, 18
mandrake, 53 f.
Margoliouth referred to, 27
marriage customs in trans-Jordanic and trans-Lebanon districts, xiii, xv, 74 ff., 89
Martineau referred to, 3 f., 7, &c.
Michelangelo's poem on the death of Cecchino Bracci, xxiii *n.*
mîdhbār, 26, 56, 84
Mu'allaqāt, 25
myrrh, liquid, 7, 36, 40

narcissus, the sweet-scented, 9
Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem, xxvii, xxix
Nizami, Persian poet, quoted, xxxv f.
Nöldeke referred to, xxx
north wind, 33

Oettli, referred to, xxiv, and notes *passim*
ointments, 2
orchard, 31
organs regarded as the seat of the affections, 36

palanquin, 22
Pantheism, xxxviii
pardēs, xxvi ff., 31
perfume boxes, 7
Persian words in the Song, xxvii
Petrie, Prof. Flinders, referred to, xxviii
Philistine speech, xxx
phoreion, xxvii f., 23
polygamy censured, xxxiv
pomegranate, 26 f., 55
Porter, Dr, quoted, 7
Post, Dr, referred to, 10, 12, 14
powders of the merchant, 22
precious fruits, 31, 33, 54
Proverbs, resemblances of the first part of, to the Song, xxiv f.
pruning, 14 f.
Psalm xlv, allegorical interpretation of, xxxvii
Psamtik I, xxviii
purple, 23, 51

quince, 10

rafters, 8
Reuss referred to, xix f.
Riehm quoted or referred to, 8, 15, 38
roe, 12

rose of Sharon, 9
rows of jewels, 6

saffron, 31
sahga, 48, 76, 89
Schleusner quoted, 39
seals, 57
sĕmādhar, 16, 17, 53
Septuagint readings, notes *passim*
sĕthāw, 14
sh, prefix for the relative, ix, xxvi
Shakespeare quoted or referred to, xix, xxviii, xxxiv, 46
Sharon, 9
Shelley quoted, 7
Shenir, 29
shields hung as adornments, 27
shōshannāh, 9, 40
Shulammite, 47, 81 f.
Smith, Prof. Robertson, quoted or referred to, xii, xxviii, 10
Solam, 9, 47
Solomon, one of the *dramatis personae*, xv, 81 ff.
Solomon, Song of, superscription, ix, xxiii; meaning of title, ix; place in the Canon, x; appointed to be read on the eighth day of the Passover, x; date of admission into the Canon, x f.; discussion as to its right of admission, x, xxvi; viewed as a connected whole, xi ff., xvii, 3, 58; early allegorical interpretation, xi; taken by some to be a collection of love-poems, xii; and by others to be a collection of national or popular songs, xiii; similarity of parts of the book to wedding *wasfs*, xiii ff.; probably work of one person, xiv; supposed to be based on a definite tale, xvi, xxii f.; outline of the story, xviii; the dramatic view, xviii ff.; modern parallels, xx ff.; discussion as to Solomon's authorship, xxiii f., 43; date, xxv ff., 31; the purpose of the book, xxxi; allegorical interpretation, xxxv, xxxviii ff.; points of likeness to other Eastern love-poems, 51 f.; the great panegyric of love, 56, 58, 90; dramatic lyric form, 59
songs at marriages, 74 ff.
south wind, 33
spices, 32
spikenard, 6, 31
spring, description of, 14
Stanley quoted, 14
Sufis, xxxviii
sword dance, 48, 74 ff.
Syriac Version readings, 4, 9, &c.

Tahpanhes, fortress of, xxviii
Targum readings, 9, 14, &c.
Tennyson quoted, 5, 13, 57, 59
Theocritus quoted, 17, 30
Tholuck quoted, xxxvi f.
threshing-board, great part played by, in marriage customs, 74 f.
Tirzah, xxiv, 42 f.
tower-like neck, 50
Tristram quoted or referred to, 6 f., 12, 15, 55, &c.
turtle-dove, 15

uncommon words, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 22, 29, 30, 31, 36, 38, 40, 43, 46, 51, 53

veil, (*tsammāh*) 25, (*redhīdh*) 38
Vulgate readings, 4 f., &c.

Wady Sudeir, 7
walnut, 46
wasfs, xiii f., xvii, xxxiii, 25, 75, 78
watchmen, 20
Wellhausen quoted, xxix f.
Wetzstein quoted or referred to, xii ff., 25, 74 ff.
wheat, 50
word-play, 26

Yakut, 27

zāmīr, 14 f.

CAMBRIDGE: PRINTED BY JOHN CLAY, M.A. AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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3600 Brightseat Road
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